British Sociology and the Issue of the Environment

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Abstract.

The primary aim of the project is to address the issue of the neglect of the 'natural' environment in British sociology. Taking an historical approach which argues that sociology's history involves environmental, social, political and economic factors and the personalities and personal lives of its practitioners, as well as texts, theories and ideas (Chapter 1), it is argued that an environmental sociology was in existence in early 20th Century Britain in the work of the environmentalist Patrick Geddes (Chapter 2). Geddes' exclusion from institutionalised academic sociology in this country is examined in detail in Chapter 3. His disappearance can be accounted for by factors largely external to sociology itself, including contemporary intellectual and political conditions and his own personality, as well as that of his rival Leonard Hobhouse. The slow development of institutionalised academic sociology in Britain helped to ensure that Hobhousian theory remained dominant up to the 1950s, while a number of other factors, including financial difficulties at the Institute of Sociology and the disloyal behaviour of his followers effectively ensured that Geddes continued to be excluded (Chapter 4). This provides one answer to the question of the neglect of environmental issues in sociology up to the post-war period. In addition, on the basis of a comparison of aspects of the work of Hobhouse and Britain's central contemporary theorist, Anthony Giddens, in the context of Giddens's academic background and career, it is argued that in spite of his concern with other, European, theorists, Giddens's theoretical orientation remains close to that of Hobhouse (Chapter 4). Like Hobhouse, Giddens is primarily concerned with, and awards causal primacy to, the 'reflexive' agent in his social theory. The result is that his approach to environmental issues remains inadequate, since he fails either to develop an adequate approach to the relations between societies and their natural environments, or to address the structural-political issue of inequality of access to resources or inequality in the capacity to consume and pollute (Chapter 5).

For Ruth, without whose unstinting support this work would not have been finished.

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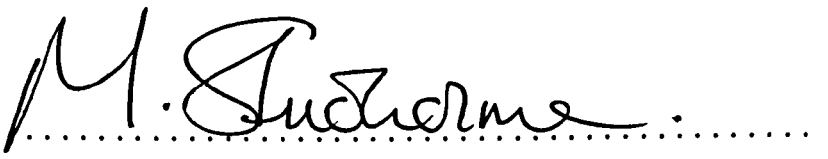
I declare that this is my own work (except where I have cited other authors), and that the views expressed herein are my own and not those of the University of Bristol.

Signed. . . .  . . . . . .

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Introduction.

Notes on The Origin and Evolution of a Research Project.

In the knowledge that it is not a conventional way to introduce a doctoral dissertation, I wish to begin with a personal account of how this project began and developed. In doing so, the plot is reversed, and the story told backwards. The issue of the contemporary environmental crisis and its treatment in the work of Britain's most cited sociologist, Anthony Giddens, which formed the starting point of the project and thus appears first in my account of the research process, appears only in the second half of the dissertation. The first half examines the foundation of sociology in Britain - the people, ideas and events surrounding its establishment as an academic discipline. The two halves are linked by a section which considers the extent to which there is historical continuity or discontinuity between the early period of British sociology and its post-war expansion.

There are two reasons for writing the introduction as a personal account. The first is to emphasise the extent to which the research has been an exciting process of discovery (as well as sometimes frustrating or disheartening). The second is to do with methodology. The dissertation examines the early history of sociology in this country, as well as aspects of its contemporary form. It would be relatively easy to justify this as somehow self-evident. At its inception, academic sociology in Britain was dominated by debates which resonate with our *fin de siècle* sense of both social and environmental 'crisis', and our consciousness of the need for some kind of 'regeneration' - whether 'moral', social or economic, environmental or eugenic. Though

this resonance seems obvious with hindsight, it seems important to emphasise the 'accidental' nature of the project.

Reflexivity is one of our contemporary sociological 'buzzwords'. Recent methodological debates in sociology have been concerned with the extent to which the reflexivity of the researcher, and the relationship between researcher and researched has relevance for the outcome of the research.[1] Yet in much academic writing - particularly of a historical or theoretical kind - the author, on whose reflexivity the character of the finished product largely depends, is absent. If I have not put my 'self' at the centre of this finished product - the result of more than three years 'reflexive' involvement by way of reading, writing and thinking - it has something to do with the way in which sociology has come to be defined, historically, as an 'academic discipline' with a particular 'scientific' or objective methodological orientation.

A major reason for the absence of many sociological authors from their own work is that it somehow takes on greater credibility if the role in its production of the author as an individual and a member of society is denied or unexamined. Thus, in spite of C. Wright Mills, the play of the imagination, the following up of a hunch, the emotional involvement of the researcher with the research have often remained unacknowledged in sociological products, particularly where these are of a historical or theoretical type. Instead, we present our work as though its end was plain at its beginning, as if it has had some logical and sequential development. We leave out the wavering uncertainties inherent in each unexpected finding - our attempts to find some order in the chaos of evidence.

A Personal Account

This project began from the profound personal dissatisfaction and disillusionment of the researcher with the 'discipline' of sociology, a fact which coloured its initial formulation, and thus becomes important to explain. The development of the project

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1 For examples of recent methodological debates, see Hammersley, M. (1991), Ramazanoglu, C. (1992), Gelsthorpe, L. (1992), and Williams, A.(1993).

was influenced by many factors, accidental and coincidental, and personal and political, as well as academic.

The Origin of a Research Project

The project was initially conceived at the end of a decade in which environmental crises and disasters seemed increasingly to dominate the news. As a parent I was primed to be disturbed by the events at Bhopal and Chernobyl. Perhaps, also, my undergraduate encounter with the work of Jeremy Seabrook had sensitised my imagination. His nightmare visions of a captive and depleted humanity, wrecking the earth in its search for some lasting but intangible satisfaction, had left an enduring impression on my mind (see especially, Seabrook, 1974, 1978, 1985). Increasingly I felt despondent about the future which my children would inhabit as adults.

Sociology offered little comfort. Indeed, so far as I knew then, sociologists seemed for the most part to be blissfully unaware of the 'environmental crisis'. Jeremy Seabrook, an outsider from the point of view of institutionalised university sociology, offered a critique of industrial capitalism which incorporated an awareness that its detrimental effects were not confined to individuals but involved a systematic using-up of finite natural resources and the despoliation of the natural beauty of the earth. Yet his work was in general not regarded as 'proper' sociology. (see for example Beynon, H. (1982) and Selbourne, D. (1985)). A question began to formulate itself:

Why was the environment not central in contemporary sociology?

Quite suddenly, it seemed, between 1989 and 1991, one sociologist's name was beginning to be heard more than any other. That name was Anthony Giddens. I attended one seminar at which Giddens talked about the cultural significance of anorexia nervosa, and another at which the speaker posed the question of why Giddens

had not yet been acknowledged as our 'star' sociologist.[2] The recently published *Consequences of Modernity* was referred to as a 'big little book'.

Of course, I had read Giddens as an undergraduate. *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* had been a set text on at least two modules. Also, I had written a 'critical review' of *The Nation State and Violence* as coursework for another. In the latter book, Giddens writes of the basic importance of the New Social Movements (NSMs) in polyarchic systems for redressing the 'imbalances of power involved in surveillance' (1985: 314). Giddens includes 'counter-cultural' ecological movements, peace movements, labour movements and democratic movements among NSMs. He defines 'surveillance' as 'control of information and the superintendance of the activities of some groups by others' (ibid: 2). Even as an undergraduate in 1986, I had felt unhappy about Giddens's analysis. Given the unequal distribution of authoritative and allocative resources (both of which were intimately connected with the extent of any group's ability to 'surveille' other groups or to disseminate ideology or 'historicity') it seemed that there were few possibilities for any counter-cultural movement to influence substantially the activities of either governments or capitalist organisations in respect of the global environmental crisis.

Giddens's analysis was not improved, it seemed to me, by the appearance in 1991 of *Modernity and Self Identity*. There Giddens is concerned not with the structural properties of nation states but with the inter-connections between the personal lives of individuals and large-scale 'globalising influences' (Giddens, 1991b: 1). The self-identity of individuals becomes an ongoing 'reflexive project' or narrative which must be shaped, altered and sustained in the context of rapidly changing social systems which are both global and internally-referential. The external, natural or physical 'environment' is depicted as a 'nature' from which humanity is increasingly separated by the urban environment. Moreover, such external 'nature' is seen to be

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2 My (unfortunately undated) notes from that seminar suggest that the speaker, Professor Frank Webster, offered three possible reasons for Giddens's lack of star status: his lack of empirical work; British 'reserve' or reticence; and intellectual snobbery.

coming to an end; human intervention has so drastically altered nature that it 'loses its character as an extrinsic source of reference' (ibid: 166). Against the sequestration of experience (where direct experience of nature is only one among other dimensions), Giddens posits 'the return of the repressed' at 'fateful moments in the lives of individuals, as well as in more general social trends. It is in 'life politics' or the politics of 'life *style*' that individuals begin to re-engage with the basic existential questions that have been sequestered by Modernity. The question 'how shall we live?' comes to the fore, and is expressed through individual choice and decision making. Giddens seemed to be suggesting that the ecological crisis could be resolved through consumer choice! If this was the best that sociology could offer (coming as it did from Britain's most discussed contemporary theorist) what hope was there for sociology?

The Evolution of a Research Project

It was David Pepper's (1984) *The Roots of Modern Environmentalism* that propelled me into thinking about sociology and its lack of an 'environmental' perspective. Pepper cited Lowe and Goyder's (1983) study of environmentalist movements. Lowe and Goyder noted the uneven historical development of environmentalism, and identified four major periods of development. These were the 1890s, 1920s, late 1950s and the early 1970s. The earliest of these periods coincided with the emergence of our classical sociological perspectives in the work of Durkheim and Weber.

There seemed to be nothing particularly odd about this. At one level Classical sociology could be seen to be a critical engagement with the impact of industrialism and its politics on human societies and relations. Contemporary 'environmentalism', broadly defined, was also concerned with industrialism and its politics, but had a different focus - the impact of industrial society on the natural environment. In spite of the fact that both developed during the 1890s, it seemed that an emergent sociology and the nascent environmentalist movement were two parallel strains of thought in history which had - in a manner of speaking - moved past each other without touching.

People I spoke to suggested that the differences between early sociology and environmentalism were not only obvious, but so profound as to have made all contact between the two sides impossible, historically. These differences had something to do with the response of each to Darwinian biology, the gulf that separated post-enlightenment rationalism from late nineteenth century romanticism, and the difference between an academic discipline and a political protest group or social movement.

Pepper highlighted the romanticism inherent in the environmentalist movement of the 1890s. Men such as Ruskin, Morris and Mill, all of whom founded environmental movements, he claimed

> . . . rejected the optimism of economic liberalism and became pessimistic about the prospects for social and economic advancement through laissez faire capitalism. They were equivocal towards industrialism and, like earlier romantics, saw it as destroying morality and social order, human health and values, and nature (Pepper, 1984: 17-18).

This suggested that a potential link between the sociology of Durkheim and environmentalists like Ruskin was the concept of community. This idea, which Robert Nisbet (1967) called one of the 'unit-ideas of sociology', seemed to hold out some promise for an examination of the relations (or lack of them), between classical sociological ideas and those of the environmental movement. Another potential link appeared to be that each side had engaged in a critique of classical liberalism and its (disintegrative) impact on the social 'order'. In sociology, moreover, this critique was not, in spite of its claims to the contrary, objective or 'scientific'. Nisbet emphasised the extent to which classical sociology was grounded in the 'persisting moral conflicts' of the nineteenth century (1967: 19). Could the sociological critique be seen to be at all 'romantic', in its moral values? If so, was this yet another 'link' between classical sociology and environmentalism?

Pepper (1984) followed O'Riordan (1981) in making a broad distinction between techno-centric (rational, scientific) and eco-centric (non-rational or 'romantic') environmentalism. Within each division he identified further subdivisions, or positions

along an ideological continuum between Deep Ecologists, who believe in the intrinsic value of 'nature' and hence its protection and conservation, and Cornucopians (after Cotgrove, 1982), who believe that humankind will always find a way to solve environmental difficulties through the application of science and technology. As well as these specifically environmentalist positions, and following Sandbach (1980), Pepper recognises divisions among environmentalists along a more traditional political line from Left to Right. These positions broadly match those between Marxism and Functionalism or 'conflict' and 'consensus' theorists in sociology. Further, Pepper suggests an underlying philosophical distinction between environmental determinists (for whom environment is a major determinant of human activity), and those committed to free-will (for whom humans control their own activities and future). In these terms, most sociological thought, historical and contemporary, consensus or conflict oriented, seemed to be grounded in a techno-centric perspective involving the application of (social) science to the amelioration of the human (social) environment.

Pepper's distinction between the underlying philosophical positions of commitment to determinism or free-will, however, illuminated what appeared to be a basic difference between sociology and environmentalism. In the history of sociology, this sort of debate has been common - but it has usually, in the recent history of the discipline, been concerned with the question of the extent to which a distinctively *social* (rather than *natural*) environment 'determines' the activities of individuals or collectivities.

Durkheim's distinction between mechanical and organic solidarity; the rejection of Parsonian Functionalism, in spite of its claims to be a theory of 'voluntaristic' action; and Giddens's attempt, in structuration theory, to reconcile the structure and agency division in sociology, have all been contributions to this debate about the influence of the social environment on human activity.

Was this yet another difference between sociology and environmentalism? If so, it was a fundamental one, for the concept of 'social' environment seemed to have little or no consonance with that of the 'natural', 'organic', or physical environment.

At about this time I was able to list, in my (second) research proposal and grant application to the ESRC, a series of questions about the nature of the relationship between sociology and environmentalism:

> What were the structural locations, and philosophical and ideological differences that kept the two discourses apart, historically, and is there now, in any sense, a convergence? What were the major problems addressed by sociologists and environmentalists . . .? Were sociologists interested in environmental problems at any level, and if so how were these conceptualised . . .? How has the very idea of environment been used in sociology, historically?

Foolishly, I believed now that the answers to these questions would be fairly straightforward. My research would be, to a large extent, a matter of simply 'filling in the blanks'.

Since I could not hope to cover the whole of sociology, and since I was particularly interested in Giddens's treatment of environmental issues, I had specified British sociology in my research proposal. I would compare his work with that of the classical sociologists.

Variation

The classics meant Durkheim, Weber, Marx. I had learned that these three were at the baseline of all sociology. The textbooks I had used, as an undergraduate, included not only *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory*, but also Philip Abrams' (1982) *Historical sociology* and David Lee and Howard Newby's (1983) *The Problem of Sociology*. Each of these texts treated our European Founding Fathers as if their status was self-evident. Marx, Durkheim and Weber were the 'three names which rank above all others' in the foundation of sociology (Giddens 1971: vii). Since Marx died in 1883, and the 1890s was the earliest date of the articulation of environmentalist ideas according to Lowe and Goyder, the project, in its initial formulation, would examine attitudes to 'nature' and environment, the treatment of humanity/nature relations, and

any links with environmentalism in the work of Durkheim and Weber.[3] Moreover, the link between the European founders and the central figure in contemporary British sociology - Anthony Giddens, were well documented by Giddens himself. That Giddens had begun to take on board environmental issues helped add to the coherence of the project. His intellectual association (and apparent theoretical compatibility) with the German, Ulrich Beck, whose 1986 *Risikogesellschaft* appeared to put environmental issues at the centre of his theory, was a somewhat unexpected bonus. The sociological community's response to the 1992 translation, *Risk Society*, included the establishment in 1993 of a British Sociological Association (BSA) Study Group on 'Risk and the Environment'. The first meeting of this group (at the London School of Economics) drew an unexpectedly large audience. Were environmental issues beginning to be central, and if so how were they defined? I added Beck's theory to my project.

I began to read about the history of British sociology. Philip Abrams's (1968) essay on its origins gave me three 'major' names: Francis Galton, Leonard Hobhouse and Patrick Geddes. Although other names do appear in his account - in particular Geddes' patrons Victor Branford and J. Martin White, the English Positivists J.H. Bridges and Frederic Harrison, Charles Booth, Seebohm Rowntree, and C.S Loch of the Charity Organisation Society - Galton, Hobhouse and Geddes seemed to be of pivotal importance for the establishment of sociology in Britain. Abrams characterised them as 'wealthy amateurs with careers elsewhere, academic deviants, or very old men' (Abrams, 1968: 103). They were the men whose great achievements were the foundation of the Sociological Society of London in 1903, and the establishment, at the London School of Economics (LSE) in 1907, of a Chair in sociology. Galton, Hobhouse and Geddes, not Durkheim or Weber, were the founders of British

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3 Peter Dickens's (1992) *Nature and Society: Towards a Green Social Theory* does examine Marx's treatment of nature/humanity relations It must have been, then, on the brink of publication. Even earlier, Benton's (1989) article *Marxism and Natural Limits*, involved an ecological critique of Marx's economic theory, which is among the works cited by Dickens.

sociology as an academic institution. Galton was the 'very old man'. Hobhouse was Abrams' 'academic deviant'. That left Geddes in the role of 'wealthy amateur' with an alternative career (though it would be a while before I understood the complexities inherent in that statement).

On the shelves of Bristol's library, to my great surprise, I found all three volumes of the *Sociological Papers*, the journal in which the proceedings of the early meetings of the Sociological Society were reproduced. The second and third volumes had never been read by anyone; the pages were uncut - a strong hint that these volumes were seen as unimportant at Bristol - a department founded during the post-war expansion of sociology.[4] Yet inside these books I found a battle raging. It was a battle for the right to define 'what' sociology would be, a battle for academic recognition, and a political battle between the old and the new Liberalisms inter-mingled with a debate about Eugenics and National Efficiency.

I read Owen (1974) and Collini (1979) on Hobhouse, and Boardman (1944, 1978), Mairet (1957) and Meller (1990) on Geddes. The Eugenist, Galton, I pushed aside initially. Not only was his theory (and his politics) distasteful, but he had not fought the battle to the end. Although he had come out of retirement to present his first paper, he had initially refused to join the Sociological Society, on the basis that its 'activities would begin and end with "palaver"' (cited in Saleeby, undated, circa 1906: 117). Although Eugenics was to be an important factor in the early days of the Society, the outcome of the struggle would be of lesser importance to Galton, partly owing to his advanced age, and partly to the fact that his independent means and reputation as a scientist and statistician allowed him to endow first a Eugenics Records Office (1905), and later, on his death, a Chair in Eugenics at the University of London (1911), with the recommendation that this should go to his disciple, Karl Pearson.

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4 Dahrendorf (1995: 98) records that his own copy of *Sociological Papers* initially belonged to the then Archbishop of York, Cosmo Gordon. Gordon, he says, had never read his either, since its pages were also uncut!

Hobhouse was a liberal. His status as an 'academic deviant' came from the fact that he had abandoned a career in Philosophy at Oxford for the world of journalism at the *Manchester Guardian*. His sociology was grounded in his philosophical outlook, which was itself concerned to prove that the biological theory of evolution could not be applied in a straightforward way to the evolution of society - as was advocated, in particular, by Herbert Spencer.

According to Abrams, Geddes was an eccentric biologist turned sociologist whose work was confused and confusing, his methodology suspect and ill-defined. In spite of certain brilliant anticipations of what future sociology would be, his achievement, in the last analysis, was almost wholly 'negative' (1968: 114-120). It was in Boardman's (1978) book on Geddes that I first began to realise that I had hit upon an historical link between environmentalist ideas and sociology which dated from the final decades of the nineteenth century. Boardman quoted Geddes' (1884) 'ecological warning' that

> when any given environment or function, however apparently productive, is really fraught with disastrous influence to the organism, its modification must be attempted, or, failing that, its abandonment faced (Geddes, 1884, cited in Boardman, 1978 : 4-5).

Patrick Geddes! His name was nowhere cited in the textbooks I had learned from as an undergraduate. Giddens was concerned with European figures, as was Abrams in his later book (1982), which had in any case a different focus (it was concerned with historical sociology rather than the history of sociology).[5] Lee and Newby's book contained references to Galton as a 'social Darwinist' (1983: 90), and a paragraph on Hobhouse who had 'almost unwittingly' produced a theory 'which completely reverses Spencer's view of civilisation as unregulated individual self-interest' (ibid: 83).[6]

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5 Abrams's posthumously published *Historical Sociology* was a contribution to debates going on in both history and sociology at that time, concerning whether either should be idiographic or nomothetic in orientation.

6 Hobhouse's 'reversal' of Spencer was not 'unwitting' but deliberate (see Chapters Three and Four).

The Founding Fathers of sociology, in Lee and Newby's book as for Giddens and Abrams, were Marx, Durkheim, and Weber. The founders of academic sociology in Britain seemed to have all but disappeared from contemporary textbooks. This left me looking at an historical link between sociology and environmentalism that had clearly, at one point existed (however tenuous it might yet turn out to be), but was now nowhere in evidence. Not only had Geddes vanished from view, but so also had Hobhouse and Galton.

This raised a number of issues. Clearly it was for the quality of their theoretical ideas that Marx, Durkheim and Weber were revered in contemporary sociology. I had no major quarrel with this, apart from my new-found interest in environmentalism. Yet sociology was an academic institution as well as a collection of ideas. Without its institutional embodiment it was unlikely that the classical theories would have become so well known. And what had happened to Hobhouse, who, as well as being the first Professor of Sociology in a British University, had been a theorist in his own right? Most importantly, where had the environmentalist Geddes gone?

For sociologists of an earlier generation, many of whom have 'lived' the expansion and development of the discipline in the post-war era, these questions might seem unproblematic. But I became, at that point, dramatically aware that what I had understood to be *the* history of sociology was simply a particular construction of that history. It was a construction, moreover, that was so firmly established, so self-evident, as to be questioned by few contemporary sociologists.

One of the few who had both been involved in the institutionalisation of sociology *and* questioned the construction of its history, however, was the American, Edward Shils. In a long essay in 1971, he had asked

> How has all this come about? Why has the intellectual stock of sociology come to be what it is and why has it taken that form in particular places? Why have certain ideas which are now thought to be constitutive of sociology come to dominate the subject? (1971: 761)

Shils suggested that though universities, as institutions, did not create sociology, they functioned to focus attention on, and reinforce, particular sociological ideas. Universities fostered the 'production of works' which then became part of the sociological tradition.

> Institutions create a resonant and echoing intellectual environment. The sociological ideas which undergo institutionalisation are thereby given a greater weight in the competition of interpretations of social reality.(1971 : 762)

This did not really clarify matters all that much. For though it provided at least a tentative explanation for the disappearance of Geddes, whose sociological work was undertaken outside the remit of institutionalised sociology, it did not explain what had happened to Hobhouse, much of whose work was very much the product of sociology as an academic institution. Shils explained it by suggesting that sociology was poorly established in Britain during Hobhouse's time and that he had little support from other academics. Moreover, the only journal, the *Sociological Review*,[7] was in the hands of 'amateurs, enthusiasts and cranks' (1971: 769). Looked at from another angle, however, the problem was not so easily explained. Hobhouse was in a unique and privileged position to define and develop the subject matter of sociology from 1907 until his death in 1929. The sole British chair in sociology passed to his friend, colleague and disciple, Morris Ginsberg, who continued to be the only professor of sociology in Britain until the post-war expansion of the 1960s. The institutional base of sociology in Britain may have been small, but it *was* firmly established. His disappearance was, therefore, a question at least as perplexing, if not more so, than that of Geddes, the environmentalist.

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7 The *Sociological Review* was the successor to the *Sociological Papers*, first published in 1908, during Hobhouses's first year in the Chair. He was its editor until 1911.

Natural Selection?

By this time I seemed to have come a long way from the question with which I had originally embarked upon the project. From the question 'why is the environment not central in contemporary sociology?', and the subsequent formulation of a series of questions which would help to explain this, I had arrived at a whole series of seemingly unconnected questions? How did the environmentalist, Geddes, disappear from sociology? What happened to Hobhouse and his theory? What was the relation between institutionalisation and ideas, or the relation between the early period of institutionalisation and the later one? How had Marx, Durkheim, and Weber come to be seen as our 'founding fathers'? And where did this leave Giddens, in relation to this alternative perspective on the history of British sociology?

As surely and imperceptibly as an infant, who grows without his parents noticing, my project had outgrown its boots. Where I had intended to examine the concept of 'environment' in Durkheim and Weber, and Giddens's treatment of the current 'crisis', I had now a bigger group of thinkers to contend with. In place of two discrete episodes in historical time (the early years of sociology and the present), I had mid-century changes to contend with also.

I dropped Weber, who was little known in Britain until at least the 1930s.[8] Durkheim was recognised in Britain as a professional sociologist from as early as 1903. He had played a role in the establishment of the Sociological Society. He retained, therefore, at least some importance for the project

By this time I had become 'emotionally' attached to Patrick Geddes - whose personality was large, and whose work was every bit as difficult and eccentric as his biographers suggested. I felt that he had been undeservedly neglected in the history of sociology, and this reaction was (in general) not uncommon among those who had

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8 The earliest critical work on Weber in English appears to be a 1933 essay by H.M. Robertson: *A Critique of Weber and His School.* Robertson's name does not appear in the bibliography to the 1943 essay on *Max Weber and German Politics* by J.P. Mayer from LSE. Mayer says in the foreword that the work was begun in 1934, when 'the political writings of Max Weber are almost unknown' (Mayer, 1943: 7).

taken any interest in him. Even Abrams had suggested that his sociology was worthy of closer study than it had to date received - even from Geddes himself (1968: 152). He was also my sole link with environmentalism in early British sociology.

Among a number of possible reasons for his disappearance was a poorly documented 'dispute' with Hobhouse over the allocation of the Martin White Chair at LSE. I developed a suspicion that Hobhouse had been ruthlessly devoted to the advancement of his own academic work, and began to read his books and his biography, in the hope that I could find some clues to his relationship (personal as well as intellectual) with his rival.

I had by this time read and written widely about Giddens, structuration theory and its critics, though I had, now, no idea how I would use it. It seemed unlikely that he could be linked to Geddes, via an 'environmentalist' approach. It looked as though my dissertation would consist of discrete historical episodes, with no continuity between them.

In the course of reading Hobhouse, however, I was struck again and again by several similarities between his ideas and Giddens's. Each made individuals the 'motor' of social change. Each had a very similar concept of the 'agent', motivation, and reflexivity. Was there perhaps, some connection between these two men, one of whom had dominated the early years of British sociology, just as the other dominated in the present?

With the help of an unpublished PhD thesis on the development of sociology first degree courses at English Universities from 1907-1971(Fincham, 1975), I began to make some tentative connections.

Before the second World War, the University of London, whose sociology department at LSE was dominated first by Hobhouse and then by the Hobhousian Ginsberg, had been the only University in this country to offer a degree in sociology. Such degrees as were on offer elsewhere were external degrees of the University of London (LSE). Fincham suggested that the formal course structures of the external degrees followed closely the structure of that offered by LSE. Four University

Colleges offered this degree: Hull, Nottingham, Exeter and Leicester. Giddens had been at Hull between 1956 and 1959. Although Hull had received its charter in 1954, allowing it to devise its own courses and validate its own degrees, it seemed unlikely that the structure of the degree in sociology had been radically revised all at once, making it extremely likely that Giddens, as an undergraduate, had learned Hobhousian theory as part of a degree course whose very structure reflected an earlier era.

Another connection appeared to be Hobhouse and Giddens's common interest in psychology. Giddens had studied psychology with sociology for his bachelor degree. Hobhouse had not only insisted that social psychology should be part of the syllabus for the sociology degree, but had undertaken to teach it himself.

Yet it was abundantly clear that Giddens's interest was in the three 'founding fathers', Marx, Durkheim and Weber. He had never cited Hobhouse in an academic context. It seemed possible that the apparent affinities between their theoretical perspectives were simply an accidental outcome of his undergraduate education - a particular mind-set or way of thinking.

But if this went some way towards suggesting an element of continuity between the early and later periods of sociology, it did not explain Giddens's particular interest in Marx, Durkheim and Weber. And if it was possible to designate his interest in Marx as a 'sign of the times' (i.e. the 1960s), what about Durkheim and Weber? The link, in this case, had to be Parsons. In spite of the fact that an early journal article by Giddens shows him analysing life in a student hall of residence in a distinctly functionalist vein (Giddens, 1960), it was clear that by the time of *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* in 1971, he was moving away from this perspective. A careful reading of the preface to that book told me that not only was it intended at least partly as a re-interpretation of what Parsons had written about Durkheim and Weber, but that Giddens was also quite clearly aware of another interpretation of Durkheim. This earlier interpretation was one in which Durkheim was presented as the purveyor of an 'unsound' theory of a 'group mind'. Moreover, it was one which had emanated, in the first instance, from Hobhouse's years at LSE.

The research had come full circle! From a concern with Giddens's treatment of environmental issues, to the early history of British sociology, in an attempt to discover how it had come about that environmental issues were either absent or inadequately dealt with in sociology, I had come back to Giddens as an intellectual heir to Hobhouse. An environmentalist perspective, however inadequate or ill-defined, had been in existence during the early days of British sociology in the work of Patrick Geddes, but had somehow become 'lost' during institutionalisation. At last I had assembled the parts of my jigsaw. All that remained would be to see if and how they could be put together to show at least part of a bigger picture in which, somewhat ironically, the centre - environmentalism - was not there. The remainder of this introduction traces the outline of that picture as it appears in the chapters to follow.

Orthogenic Evolution?

Given the nature of the project and the way in which it developed, there are obviously a variety of textual structures which might have been imposed upon the material. I hope that the structure I have finished up with is comprehensible. Also, as a result of the particular focus of the project, which began and ended with Giddens, much interesting material that might have been taken further has become somewhat marginal to the project itself. This is particularly true in three respects.

First, as I have noted briefly in Chapter One, Geddes was not the only late nineteenth century sociologist or 'social theorist' who was directly concerned with the inter-relations between humanity and nature, or who insisted on the importance of environment in shaping both cultures and personalities. Others included Friedich Ratzel in Germany, Rudolph Steinmetz in the Netherlands, and Vidal de La Blache in France. I have read little of the work, or about the ultimate fate of these thinkers and their theories (with the exception of Vidal de La Blache, whose work was of interest in connection with Durkheim). Even so, it is clear that an interesting alternative to the project as it appears here might have been a cross-cultural comparative study of environmentalism in late nineteenth century European social thought.

Second, on bad days, as I have struggled with Geddes' peculiar mixture of general incomprehensibility of expression combined with genuine insight, I have thought that his sociology, on its own, would have been sufficient as a topic in its own right. In the interpretation of Geddes' work which appears in Chapter Two, I have had to confine myself, for reasons of both relevance and space, to a relatively compact outline of the central aspects of his theoretical thought, although I feel certain that his sociological work - practical as well as theoretical - is worthy of further study. That this is so is evidenced by continued academic interest in the various aspects of his work (two recent examples include Meller, 1990; Mercer, 1997).

Third, apart from the environmental sociologists discussed in Chapters One and Five, there is little here about the development of environmental sociology as a sub-discipline in its own right. Environment is currently a major growth area in sociology as well as other disciplines (politics and geography are both well ahead of sociology in their consideration of environmentalism and environment). One interesting feature of its incorporation in sociology is the variety of perspectives from which it is currently being studied - both 'new' and 'traditional'. It is too early, perhaps, to tell, if, or when, one of these will emerge as the 'dominant' perspective for the study of environmental issues (though there are currently signs that it will be environment as risk), but since each has different implications for future relations between humanity and nature, a study of the political implications of all these different approaches is both desirable and necessary.

The dissertation is structured as follows. Chapter One begins by exploring briefly two strategies used by contemporary environmental sociologists to explain the absence of environment in sociology: the strategy of (economic) exuberance, and the strategy of re-interpretation (of classical theorists). These strategies are then re-examined; the first very briefly, with reference to the history of sociology in America, where contemporary environmental sociology first emerged, and the second at slightly greater length via a re-assessment of Durkheim's treatment of environment. This leads into a discussion of an alternative, more 'reflexive' strategy for the explanation of the

neglect of environment in the history of British sociology. The chapter argues that sociology is more than just a collection of ideas and theories; and more, too, than an academic 'institution'. Sociology exists *inside* the societies it studies, and is both constrained and enabled by factors external to the discipline itself. Sociology is also the social life - personal and professional - of its practitioners. Its history is, therefore, as much bound up with personal and political (social, economic and ideological) factors, as with the rise and fall of theories or ideas. This chapter is to some extent a 'cheat', since it implants at the beginning a methodological strategy that was actually worked out during the practice of the research. However, since the strategy makes explicit some working assumptions about the nature of the history of sociology, and its construction by sociologists, it was important to put it at the beginning, so that the bias of my own account is clear to the reader.

In keeping with the approach developed in Chapter One, Chapter Two begins with an outline of the social, economic, political and environmental context of the years around the turn of the century in Britain, when sociology first began to establish itself as an academic discipline, which is followed by an account of the character and theoretical orientation of Patrick Geddes, the earliest 'environmental' sociologist. This establishes a basis from which to embark upon a fairly detailed account, in Chapter Three, of the process by which Geddes was excluded from institutionalised academic sociology, while Hobhouse, the so-called 'reluctant' sociologist (Collini, 1979), moved into a position of pivotal importance for the development of the discipline.

Chapter Four gives only a brief account of the years from Hobhouse's death in 1929 to Giddens's graduation from Hull in 1959. It charts the continuing decline and disappearance of a 'Geddesian' environmental perspective outside the remit of institutionalised academic sociology, and attempts to assess the extent to which there was both intellectual or theoretical continuity *and* change inside sociology as an academic institution. This somewhat cursory treatment of a period covering thirty years is justified by the project's focus on 'environment' in sociology and its almost total neglect during these years. Giddens's location relative to the tradition of sociology

established by Hobhouse and his successor Ginsberg is established and a number of similarities between the theoretical orientation of Giddens and Hobhouse are explored.

Chapter Five returns to the issue of the environment via its incorporation in Giddens's work, and examines two moments in Giddens's treatment of environmental issues. The first moment consists of the period before his contact with Beck's 'risk society' thesis and is approached by means of a recent critique by the 'environmental sociologist' David Goldblatt (1996). The second moment consists of the period following the publication of *The Consequences of Modernity* (Giddens 1991a [1990]), in which Giddens takes up several new themes, without abandoning any of his old ones. It is argued that Giddens's insistence on the primacy of the autonomous 'reflexive' agent in his social theory, and his refusal to consider (either living or non-living) nature as something that exists independently of human societies, fundamentally inhibits the theory's capacity to address environmental problems.

The conclusion acknowledges that the text is open to a number of interpretations, while attempting to draw together the main threads of an answer to the question of *why* environmental issues have been neglected in sociology. It also pleads for the recognition of Patrick Geddes as an early founder of environmental sociology, whose work remains worthy of further investigation.

Chapter 1.

The History of Sociology and the Issue of the Environment

Introduction

Environmental sociologists currently use two strategies to explain the neglect of natural environmental factors, and the inter-relationships between societies and their environments, in the discipline as a whole over the course of its history. The first strategy - 'The Strategy of Exuberance' - also contains a myth of origin. According to this myth, sociology developed at a time of unprecedented economic growth, when neither resource shortages nor the degradation of the environment that is an inevitable (if 'latent') side-effect of industrial production were apparent. As a result, the story goes, classical sociologists paid little or no attention to environmental issues. Environmental sociology was thus not established until the 1970s, in America, when environmental degradation could no longer be ignored and was widely seen to be problematic. The jumping-off point for this heightened awareness of environmental problems is said to have been the first 'Earth Day' in 1970. In the late 1970s, the 'founding fathers' of environmental sociology, Catton and Dunlap,[1] published several papers calling for the establishment of a New Environmental Paradigm to replace what they categorised as Human Exceptionalism (Catton and Dunlap, 1978, 1980; Dunlap and Catton, 1979). Exceptionalist sociology was seen to encompass all hitherto existent sociology, the theoretical diversity of which amounted to no more than variations on a single theme. The second strategy - 'The Strategy of Re-Interpretation' - follows Catton's (1976) recommendation that contemporary sociologists need to re-

1 Although it is still early in the history of (contemporary) environmental sociology, Catton and Dunlap's status as founders has already been established by William Freudenburg and Robert Gramling (1989).

examine the near misses of their predecessors to find out where they went wrong. Since then, several environmental sociologists have looked again at the work of the 'founding fathers' of sociology - now almost universally agreed to have been Marx, Durkheim and Weber (Buttel, 1986: 338). As a result, aspects of the work of all three have been claimed as early examples of environmental sociology.

Marx and Weber remain outside the scope of this project. It is only necessary to note that Benton (1988, 1989, 1993), Dickens (1992), and Martell (1994) all find aspects of Marx's treatment of the relations between human societies and the natural environment useful for a contemporary environmental sociology. Buttel (1986) has argued that aspects of Weber's work can be seen to contain a basic human ecology, though since Martinez-Alier (1987) has also suggested that Weber rejected the importance, for sociology, of 'environmental economics', his status as environmental sociologist remains open.

The two strategies of Exuberance and Re-Interpretation are briefly outlined and re-examined here. On the basis of a re-examination of the emergence of an 'exuberant' sociology in the United States, it is argued that although the paradigm of 'Exuberance' does to some extent 'fit' the history of American sociology, neither American sociologists nor society in general were wholly unaware of resource constraints or environmental issues. This suggests that there was more involved in the foundation of 'sociology-as-if-nature-did-not-matter' (Murphy, 1995) than mere 'exuberance'. A re-examination of the re-interpretation of Durkheim as an early environmental sociologist reveals that a number of factors were involved in the establishment of Durkheimian sociology in France, including both structural (political, economic, and intellectual) conditions, and issues to do with 'agency'. In particular, Durkheim's personality, his commitment to 'founding' sociology and his ability to ward off competitors were all important factors in ensuring that *only* Durkheimian sociology became established there. This leads into a discussion of the development of an alternative strategy for explaining the absence of 'environment' in the history of sociology, via the history of environmentalist values and movements, Giddens's concept of the role of sociology as

'reflexivity' and reflexivity as a research methodology. Sociology, it is argued, is more than its intellectual heritage. It is also its 'embodiment' in both academic institutions and personnel. This means that any attempt to explain the absence of environment, either historically or in contemporary sociology must consider both the institutional forms of sociology and sociology as the 'social life' of its practitioners, both of which are embedded in the social, economic and political context of the societies of which they are a part.

The Strategy of Exuberance

Catton and Dunlap (Catton, 1976: Dunlap and Catton, 1978, Dunlap and Catton, 1994) suggest that sociology emerged at a time of unprecedented economic growth and prosperity, when natural resources were abundant. In combination with the increasing separation of humanity from nature, which resulted from urbanisation and technological progress, resource abundance and economic growth led to a generalised belief among sociologists that human beings were increasingly released from the constraints imposed by nature through the benefits of industrialisation.

Christopher Columbus' 1492 discovery of a New World 'revolutionised western civilisation and had much to do with launching and shaping sociology' (Catton, 1976: 25). This sudden territorial increase also increased the earth's ability to support a burgeoning human population, and in the period which followed, Western populations - specifically Europeans - expanded exuberantly to fill the newly available space, doubling in the two hundred years from 1650-1850, and again in the eighty years after, leading Catton (1976: 29) to describe it as 'the Age of Exuberance'. The concept of the inevitability of progress was one result of such territorial increases, which in turn helped to generate the science of sociology.

> Sociologists in the age of exuberance learned to regard human nature as something open to perpetual modification by the cumulative development of culture. . . . [which] came to seem so compelling to sociologists. . . that they overstated their non-biological conception of human nature. The overstatement became a cornerstone of the

> sociological paradigm, the obsolescence of which was felt but not understood by the 1970s. (Catton, 1976: 29-30)

Exuberance Examined

Sociology as an academic institution became established earlier in America than elsewhere (Barnes and Becker, 1938), due to the absence of an already entrenched and resistant university system (Oberschall, 1972; Seidman, 1994: 95). Although the American Sociological Society was not founded until 1905, formal courses in 'Social Science' were established during the 1860s, 70s and 80s, and the *American Journal of Sociology* dates from 1895. The first departments of sociology were at Kansas (1889) and Chicago (1892).

Late nineteenth century America was politically stable. Seidman suggests that in spite of the existence of a number of movements which challenged political hegemony, there remained a 'relatively broadly based liberal ideological consensus'. The challenges to liberal consensus came not only from labour disputes and the rise of socialism, but from a more broadly based radical political culture which included women's movements, black nationalism, and cultural criticism as well as socialism (1994: 94-7). Although Seidman's account makes no mention of early American environmentalism, rapid deforestation as part of the American attempt to 'civilise' the 'wilderness', *did* spawn early environmentalist movements and ideas between 1870 and 1910 (Simmons, 1993). In fact, a concern with the degradation of natural environments was manifest as early as the mid-1800s in, for example, the cultural criticism of Henry Thoreau (1817-62), who suggested that 'in wilderness lies the preservation of the world' (cited in Worster, 1977).

In academic life, early American sociology drew heavily on the language and data of Darwinian and Spencerian conceptions of biology, as well as on ethnography (Barnes & Becker, 1938: 955). This suggests that notions of 'environment' (or 'nature') cannot have been entirely absent in early theoretical work. As Sumner's (c.1880) *Socialism* indicates, in spite of his laissez faire political orientation (Barnes & Becker,

1938: 960), he was well aware of the limited capacity of any given environment to support its human occupants:

> If the stores of nature were unlimited, or if the last unit of the supply she offers could be won as easily as the first, there would be no social problem. If a square mile of land could support an indefinite number of human beings, or if it cost only twice as much labour to get forty bushels of wheat from an acre as to get twenty, there would be no social problem . . . . The fact is far otherwise . . . . The constant tendency of population to outstrip the means of subsistence is the force which has distributed population over the world, and produced all advance in civilisation. (W.G. Sumner, c1880, in Kennedy and Robinson, eds. 1970: 170)

Sumner's contemporary, Lester Ward, was no less aware of the importance of natural resources for social organisation. But where Sumner saw resource shortages, rather than human purposive behaviour, as the key to expansion and progress, and as an argument in favour of laissez faire economics, Ward used his perception of nature as hostile and of the finite nature of resources to argue for the importance of the social control of nature, and co-operation between people:

> Art operates to protect the weak against adverse surroundings. It is directed against natural forces, chiefly physical. By thus defeating the destructive influences of the elements and hostile forms of life, and by forcing nature to yield an unnatural supply of man's necessities, many who would have succumbed from inability to resist these adverse agencies... were able to survive, and population increased and expanded. (Lester Ward 1884, in Kennedy and Robinson, eds. 1970: 192)

These post-Malthusian ideas, the one anti-socialist, the other pro, seem to support Catton and Dunlap's view of sociology's history. American 'progress' during the nineteenth century consisted to a great extent in pushing back the 'frontiers' of the 'wilderness', through conquest, annexation and purchase of additional territory (Barraclough, 1985), rapidly deforesting on the way (Simmons, 1993). At the same time, however, Sumner's and Ward's acknowledgement of 'nature' and resources as important factors in social life, show that it is too simple to suggest that the early

American sociologists were blind to humanity's intrinsic connection to 'nature' or the finite nature of resources, or were straightforwardly 'exuberant'. They were not.

Seidman's historical analysis is not concerned with the treatment of 'environment' in sociology. Nevertheless, his conclusions tally with Catton and Dunlap's to the extent that he suggests that American sociology was institutionalised as a 'liberal' discipline which reflected the values and interests of white middle class men, and did not take on board any of the contemporary challenges to the liberal consensus. His analysis also shows, however, that to depict the early years of American sociology as occurring wholly in the context of economic abundance is an over-simplification. On the contrary, American sociology was institutionalised against the background of both distributional and political conflicts. As a result, the exclusion of both socialism and social movements, including environmentalism, from the institutionalisation and development of sociology, is rendered slightly more problematic. Exuberance as an explanation for the neglect of environment in sociology is not wholly adequate, as Dunlap and Catton (1979: 245) recognise implicitly when they cite early 'under-rated' or 'neglected' examples of 'environmental sociology', including work by Sumner (1913), Mukerjee (1930, 1932), Sorokin (1942) and Landis (1949).

The Strategy of Re-Interpretation

Catton (1976) cites Gouldner's ground-breaking book on the approaching 'crisis' in sociology (Gouldner, 1971), as evidence of a generalised awareness in the sociological community of the 'obsolescence' of a sociology which overstated the importance of 'culture'.[2] Gouldner suggested that the working assumptions of the functionalist paradigm were stifling the sociological community's ability to understand contemporary social change. His suggested remedy involved making sociology both 'radical' and 'reflexive' through the

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2 Levine (1995: 1) includes Eisenstadt (1976), Turner and Turner (1990) Wallerstein (1991) Halliday, (1992), and Horowitz (1993) among those who have documented the continuing 'crisis' in sociology.

> deepening of the sociologist's own awareness of who and what he is, in a specific society at any given time, and of how both his social role and his personal praxis affect his work as a sociologist. (Gouldner, 1971: 494, cited in Catton, 1976)

Catton's response to this was to suggest that instead of self-reflexivity, sociologists would do better to apply their critical abilities to the 'near misses' of their antecedents to find out where they went wrong. He suggested that Durkheim's work, on which Parsonian functionalism was based, had been 'misconstrued' and that sociologists

> in the post-exuberant age who want accurate understandings of the momentous changes happening around them will need a better understanding of what Durkheim actually achieved. (Catton, 1976: 38)

Without citing previous work by Schnore (1958), which claimed that Durkheim had anticipated the work of the Chicago school of classical human ecologists, Catton argued that Durkheim had in fact quite explicitly drawn major ideas from the work of the biological evolutionist Charles Darwin (Catton, 1976: 39). Moreover, Durkheim's insistence on population volume and density as mechanical causes of the division of labour was the sociological equivalent of Darwin's insistence on speciation as the result of the struggle for survival (Catton, 1976: 41).

More recently, Buttel (1986) has also drawn attention to the evolutionary framework contained in Durkheim's *Division of Labour*. He suggests that the classical 'Human Ecology' of the Chicago school, which *cannnot be labelled environmental sociology*, was developed by those with an interest in Durkheim, to become an environmental sociology. Classical human ecology was influenced, according to Buttel, by analogies drawn from plant and animal ecology. Moreover, its emphasis was 'almost exclusively on urban spatial structures in societies such as the United states that were already industrialized' (Buttel, 1986: 342; see also Miley, 1980; Gaziano, 1996). Its subsequent development, however, between Hawley's (1950) *Human Ecology* and Schnore's (1958) 'Social Morphology and Human Ecology', led to the establishment of an environmental sociology rooted in the social morphology of Durkheim (ibid). By that time, however, Parsons had discredited human ecology and supplanted it with

functionalism (ibid.). Parsons's 'misleading if not erroneous' reading of Durkheim was also the reason that the elements of 'environmental' sociology in Durkheim's work went un-noticed. Buttel suggests that it was Giddens, in *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (1971), who corrected Parsons's misinterpretation of Durkheim (ibid: 339).

Re-Interpretation Re-Examined

Catton's insistence that Durkheim's theory is the sociological equivalent of Darwin's theory of evolution is interesting, for several reasons. First, Darwin is often seen - rightly or wrongly -to have been primarily responsible for making humanity a part of nature again, after its removal during the Enlightenment (Kumar, 1978: 18; Worster, 1977: 156). Second, Darwin is also seen to be the 'father' of modern scientific ecology, which has become intermingled with environmentalism in modern political ecology (Pepper, 1984: 103; Williams, 1976). Third, Catton's interpretation is interesting because he suggests that Durkheim took on board Darwin's work while simultaneously refuting the social Darwinism of Spencer (Catton 1976: 41). Darwin's theory, and Durkheim's use of it are re-examined below.

It is also possible to take issue with several aspects of Buttel's analysis, not least the suggestion that it was Giddens who corrected Parsons's misinterpretation of Durkheim. This issue is addressed in Chapter Four. A second issue is Buttel's assertion that Hawley (1950) and Schnore (1958) developed an 'environmental sociology' on the basis of Durkheim's social morphology. Hawley, who cited Durkheim briefly only twice,[3] insisted that the major concern of human ecology was not environment, but the nature and development of community structure. Any broader definition, he said, would lead the student to 'spend himself in the mere extension of his reach' (Hawley, 1950: v). This produces an anomalous situation where Durkheim's work was *either* not really important for Hawley's development of Human Ecology, *or*, was important, but for a Human Ecology that cannot be said to be an environmental sociology of the type outlined by Catton and Dunlap because it is concerned only with community structure,

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3 The index shows three, but is mistaken.

rather than with the relations between human societies and their natural environments. Secondly, although Schnore's conception of human ecology is superior to Hawley's, since he insists on the study of population, technology and environment, as well as social relations (Schnore, 629-30) his analysis of Durkheim seems somewhat tenuous. It is based mainly on his reading of *the Division of Labour* and *The Rules of Sociological Method* and although Schnore notes that references to social morphology became less common after about 1905 (Schnore, 1958: 633fn.), he does not question why this might have been. Recent evidence, however, indicates that Durkheim's interest in social morphology may have been primarily instrumental, aimed at warding off intellectual competition from the human geographer Vidal de la Blache. Durkheim's sociology, moreover, had a number of other competitors - most particularly an environmental sociology practiced by the followers of Le Play - which raises a further question about how it was that Durkheimian, rather than Le Playist, sociology came to be institutionalised in the French University system.

Several inter-related issues need to be addressed, therefore, in order to make a proper assessment of Durkheim's status as environmental sociologist. First is Darwin's theory, and Durkheim's use of it; second, the process of the institutionalisation of French sociology via its establishment in the French University system; and third, Durkheim's treatment of social morphology in relation to the human geography of the Vidaliens.

Durkheim, Darwin and Sociology

Durkheim's engagement with the idea of humanity as part of nature, and subject to the same evolutionary processes as other animals, was embedded in the intellectual and institutional context in which he wrote. This context was one in which Durkheim was struggling to define sociology as a subject in its own right, with its own clearly delineated focus and methods, and in which he was in competition with others for both professional and theoretical status and recognition. Intellectually, Darwin's scientific theory of evolution by natural selection was a central feature of the period throughout

Europe (Hughes 1959). The sociological treatment of Darwin's theory, therefore, must play a role in any assessment of the 'environmental' elements in early sociology.

Darwin's Theory of Evolution

Debate surrounding Darwin's theory of evolution, its impact, implications, historical influences and antecedents continues (for example, Bowler, 1987; Young, 1985; Mayr, 1991). In sociology, in particular, it is generally assumed that evolutionary perspectives (including social Darwinism) emanate as much from Spencer as they do from Darwin (for example, Lee and Newby, 1983: 77-80). Yet given Darwin's revolutionary impact on both natural and social scientific thinking, sociologists could hardly have been ignorant of Darwin's work, though the depth of understanding - both of the theory itself and what it implied - varied enormously, as did the sociological uses of and responses to it.

Darwin's theory, as presented in 1859, was a compound theory, composed of several sub-theories, each of which fared differently over time according to its impact on widely held beliefs and values (Mayr, 1991: 38-9; see also Hawkins, 1997: 32). The evolution process, Darwin recognised, involved two separate processes: transformation over time, and transformation in geographical and ecological space. All species, he believed, could ultimately be traced to a single ancestor (the theory of common descent). The enormous diversity of existing species had occurred through multiplication by one of two processes; either by splitting into daughter species, or due to the geographic isolation of a parent population, which then evolved into a separate species. The process was gradual rather than sudden. Moreover, within each generation there was great diversity in characteristics; Darwin suggested that only those with a particularly well-adapted combination of characteristics would survive to produce the next generation (Mayr, 1991:35-7). Only the last of these propositions is the theory of natural selection and it was this which many of Darwin's contemporaries (including Huxley, Romanes and others) found hard to swallow. Darwin's major difficulty was that he did not understand the (genetic) origin of variation, nor, as a result, *how* species originated - whether through geographic isolation of a population

or through differentiation within a population occupying the same territory (allopatric or sympatric speciation) (Mayr, 1991: 33-34). Consequently, although he wrote in 1859 of 'natural selection' as the major factor in evolutionary change, he did not entirely rule out the earlier, Lamarckian, evolutionary mechanism, which involved the gradual transformation of species towards more perfect forms through the efforts of the organism to adapt itself to its environment (Mayr, 1991; Jones, 1980). Because he had not got the requisite knowledge of genetics, Darwin was not entirely clear about whether or not acquired physical characteristics (as opposed to innate qualities) were heritable, shifting from an emphasis on the inheritance of innate characteristics in *On The Origin of Species* (1859), towards the transmission of acquired characteristics in *The Descent of Man* (1871) (Jones, 1980: 78).

In 1883, however, the biologist August Weismann (who, like Darwin and Lamarck, had previously believed in the inheritance of acquired characteristics) published *On Heredity*, in which, based on detailed (though poorly conceptualised) experimental work, he categorically denied that acquired characteristics could be transmitted between generations (Mayr, 1991:110). Darwin's co-discoverer of evolution by natural selection A.R. Wallace, immediately supported Weismann, later publishing his selectionist *Darwinism* (1889). By 1885, Weismann was arguing that the germ plasm (the genetic material which produces the next generation) became separated from the soma plasm (from which the organism itself develops) at a very early stage in life, so that changes acquired over time could not then be transferred to the next generation (Mayr, 1991:122). Although Weismann was essentially correct in this, it was not until the rediscovery of Mendelian genetics in 1900, that the mechanism which produced the variations which led to natural selection was found (although even then, the way in which genes as a mechanism operated through the recombination of parental genes rather than as a consequence of blending, was not properly understood). In the mean-time, many continued to believe in the inheritance of acquired characteristics, a theory that did not finally die out until the 1940s and 50s (Mayr, 1991:120).

There are effectively two stages in Darwin's theory of natural selection, internal and external, although in practice the two stages cannot be separated (Mayr, 1991: 87). In the first stage internal variation occurs (now known to be the result of the recombination of parental genetic material). In the second, those variations which are useful to the individual in any given environment survive, while those that are useless or negative in their effect will die out. The environment only 'passively' determines which characteristic survives and which dies out; internal characteristics of the organism actively effect its interaction with its environment. The theory is complicated by sexual selection, which Darwin (and later Weismann also) realised was not related to genetic selection (genotypes), but was made on the basis of outward physical appearances (phenotypes). Darwin stressed that evolution by natural selection was an *accidental process unrelated to any particular directional changes.* There was no guarantee, first, that the internal differences between two generations would be passed on to a third generation; and, second, survival of particular genes might have less to do with their advantages for individual adaptation and survival than with sexual selection and reproductive success.

As Young has suggested, 'Darwinism' became an umbrella term for a much more general evolutionary movement which began at the end of the eighteenth century with the publication of Erasmus Darwin's *Zoonomia* (1985: 1-2). Theories that went under the name of Darwinism, then, might bear little or no resemblance to Darwin's own, depending on the moment at which they were constructed, the theorists' capacity for understanding contemporary biology,[4] which other evolutionists they had read, and even which of the editions of Darwin's species book they had picked up. In addition, theorists' receptiveness to different aspects of Darwin's work might be affected by a number of other factors, including religious beliefs in a created or unchanging world; a belief the uniqueness of humankind emanating either from the Christian religion or the

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4 As Halliday (1979: 122-123) has pointed out, the Victorians regarded the methods and subject matter of biology as 'clear and fairly easy', and associated with the removal of 'doubt, perplexity and mystery'.

post-Enlightenment philosophers; philosophical essentialism (the belief that all natural phenomena are manifestations of a limited number of constant 'essences'); a belief in final causes (teleology); or a generally accepted belief, for generations after Bacon and Descartes in universal laws of nature (Mayr, 1991: 38-9).

Darwin's Influence in France

Clarke (1984) has suggested that many French intellectuals had no sophisticated understanding of Darwin's work, but 'simply raided Darwinism to bolster preconceived opinions' (1984: 176). Darwin was appealed to in support of a wide range of ideological positions, including socialism, co-operation, pacifism and democracy, as well as individualism, competition and militarism.

Clarke argues that 'Darwinism' in French social thought took two different forms: a 'reform Darwinism' distinguishable from 'social Darwinism'. The latter involved the concept of competition or the struggle for existence, while the former insisted that Darwin's theories provided more support for the idea of 'co-operation for life' (Clarke, 1984: 6-7). Moreover, there was a distinct shift away from social and toward reformist Darwinism (with a corresponding decrease in the use of organic analogies in social thought) in the closing years of the nineteenth century and the opening decade of the twentieth, in the work of social thinkers including Espinas, Marion, Worms, and Fouillée (ibid: 118-126).

In addition, the French situation was complicated both by the popularity of Spencer and by a Lamarckian revival in the late nineteenth century. Spencer's evolutionism, which itself derived largely from Lamarck rather than Darwin (Peel, 1971: 134-5; Jones, 1980: 85-7; Clarke, 1984: 120), confused the issue further, for although he argued against state intervention on behalf of the 'unfit' (an ideological position akin to social Darwinism), Spencer also suggested that social evolution (when not interfered with) leads away from militarism and egoistic competition and towards altruistic, co-operative, industrialism (a teleological position nearer to reform Darwinism). The reason that the state should *not* intervene was simply that this would prevent evolution - since it was only through *the efforts of individuals themselves* that

evolution - as increased 'fitness' for the 'social state' could be produced (Spencer, cited in Peel, 1971: 148 - 50).

Durkheim: Societies as part of Nature?

For Durkheim, humanity was part of nature, but unique among all living things in its capacity for communication and sociability. This is best illustrated by beginning with the theory of knowledge he developed in his last major work, *The Elementary Forms of the Religious Life*:

> At the root of all our judgements there are a certain number of essential ideas which dominate all our intellectual life . . . the categories of the understanding: ideas of time, space, class, number, cause, substance, personality etc. They correspond to the most universal properties of things (1915 [1912]: 9)

These categories (or 'essences') have a social origin; they do not emanate from individual experience, but are shared and exist independently of any particular individual.

> If men did not agree upon these essential ideas at every moment, if they did not have the same conception of time space, cause number etc., all contact between their minds would be impossible, and with that all life together. Thus society could not abandon the categories to the free choice of the individual without abandoning itself. . . . Does a mind ostensibly free itself from these forms of thought? It is no longer considered a human mind in the full sense of the word, and is treated accordingly. (ibid: 17)

For Durkheim, the common conceptual basis of communication is the foundation of *social* life. Without society people cannot be fully human, so that the social or 'moral' order is seen, by Durkheim, to be fundamentally important. It is what makes a distinctively *human* existence possible, and is, therefore, prior to all other aspects of social life. The categories of thought are social constructs - they originate in society and are transmitted socially; they transcend the experience of individuals, and they express social conditions - even when the things that are expressed by them are 'natural' things. But the categories we apply to nature, the basic concepts through which we comprehend it, are not mere metaphors, which have a practical use but bear

no relation to reality. Society, Durkheim wrote in 1912, echoing a statement of 1903, (see Chapter 3, p.128)

> . . . is a part of nature, and indeed its highest representation. The social realm is a natural realm which differs from the other only by a greater complexity. Now it is impossible that nature should differ radically from itself in the one case and the other in regard to that which is most essential. The fundamental relations that exist between things - just that which it is the function of the categories to express - cannot be essentially different in the different realms.(Durkheim, 1915 [1912]: 18)

Thus, humanity is both a part of nature, according to Durkheim, and endowed with special characteristics which enable us to fully comprehend it. Even the most primitive religions serve this function of understanding the world. In fact, among their other functions (including the most fundamental function of re-affirming the individual's emotional attachment to society (ibid: 427)), primitive religions are the precursors of modern scientific thought (ibid: 429).

Here, Durkheim was doing two things. First, he wanted to argue that human scientific thought was capable of fully comprehending the world of nature.[5] Second, he put humanity firmly inside the realm of nature. Yet, against the background of the generalised acceptance, by at least the 1890s, of the fact that Darwin's achievement was an enormous scientific advance (even where it was not properly understood, or where parts of it were still disputed), he could hardly have done otherwise. In raising the status of human society to that of nature's 'highest representation', however, Durkheim marked us out as unique among all other living beings, through our capacity to understand 'nature' - thus rejecting the imputation that humanity is subject to the same blind forces as the rest of nature. This was not a late development in Durkheim's

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5 Long before publication of *The Elementary Forms*, in his course on Moral Education at the Sorbonne (1902-3), Durkheim suggests that scientific understanding of nature is 'the wellspring of our autonomy' (1961 [1925]: 116) As Watts Miller (1996: 166) says, Durkheim's suggestion that scientific understanding might lead to a freely chosen acceptance of the natural order of things raises 'crucial issues' in respect of contemporary attitudes to nature. Durkheim, however, never developed this line of thought anywhere else.

conceptual thinking about societies, but one which had marked his work from the very beginning.[6]

In *The Division of Labour* (1893), Durkheim had explained the mechanics of social change (the means by which, among other things, a primitive religious cosmology is 'transformed' or 'evolves' into a modern scientific one). His account of social change drew heavily on Darwinism (Lukes, 1975: 170; Hawkins, 1997: 12), even though there are only five direct references to Darwin and most of Durkheim's polemic was aimed specifically at Spencer, to whom there are 105 references (Borlandi, 1993: 70).

Contrary to Lamarckian (and Spencerian) theory, Durkheim suggested, with Darwin, that evolution is *not* the result of the goal directed behaviour of individuals, but of causes that are purely 'mechanical'. Increases in the volume and density of societies (i.e. in the number of people who live in close contact with one another) increase the competition for limited resources so that just like other animals humans are forced to specialise to survive (1933 [1893]: 266). The function of the division of labour, therefore, appears to be that it mitigates the struggle for existence, and in doing so serves a social need (of preserving society, and making it more 'solidary').

This was as far as Durkheim wanted to go with Darwinian theory, however. Although he could not do otherwise than agree, *overtly*, with Darwin, there are a number of clues in this early work which point to a different perspective. Early on in the book he opposed humanity to the nature it is supposedly part of, when he wrote of the 'fight against nature' (1933 [1893]: 42), a slip which indicates either an Enlightenment view of humanity as separate from nature, or (less likely, perhaps) a religious world view. He suggested that the physical environment remains relatively constant (ibid: 343), perhaps a further indication that he may have retained, unthinkingly, a creationist view of the world. The social environment, on the other

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6 As early as 1892, in his thesis on Montesquieu, Durkheim was inclined to play down Montesquieu's appeal to the influence of climate and terrain on social and political structure and the character of the population (Durkheim, 1997 [1892]: 48-9, 56).

hand, inevitably changes (ibid: 344). It is to the social rather than the physical environment, therefore, that we must look for the causes of change (ibid: 251). Thus, Durkheim exhibited little awareness of the impact of human societies on the natural world, or of the effects of such changes back onto human societies. His discussion of the gradual development of morphological differentiation between men and women according to function is frankly Lamarckian (ibid: 60), while his insistence on the increasingly diminished importance of heredity and instinct in human development, in his discussion of the work of Francis Galton, makes it plain that he wished to release humanity from any 'inevitable' natural forces (ibid: 305-328; particularly pp.321-3). As Hawkins (1997: 12) points out, Durkhiem's refusal of biological reductionism is likely to be linked to his awareness - as a Jew and a Dreyfusard - of its 'racialist possibilities'.

The value of the division of labour is not that it leads to civilisation or to greater happiness - Durkheim went to great lengths to insist that often the opposite is true. Rather its *moral* character lies in the fact that it is a *necessary* constraint externally imposed on human activity (ibid: 42 and 53), and has as one result the fact that people become simultaneously more and more different from one another, *and* more and more dependent on one another (ibid: 37). And since society is the primary condition of a fully human existence, any increase in the degree of social interdependence results in an expansion of the distinctively 'human' qualities of existence. With each increase in the degree of division of labour in society, therefore, human beings become more and more fully human. Thus although Durkheim made the division of labour the inevitable result of biological and physical evolutionary forces, its real importance for him, as for Spencer, was its value for *social* evolution.

Social evolution, under 'normal' conditions, increases the human capacity for understanding both itself *and* nature, with the result that we become able to control the direction of change through science. Civilisation may be no more than the inevitable result of the division of labour (ibid: 336-7), but this does not prevent it becoming an end in itself (ibid: 339). Durkheim introduced the idea that there is a 'normal' state of social 'health'; an ideal intensity of social life in which there is a perfect 'fit' between the

needs of the individual and the availability of the means to satisfy them (ibid: 340). To ascertain this ideal state of health was to be the province of sociology. What is more, since the conditions of the social environment continually change, the social need for sociology will be perpetual (ibid: 339-44).

Durkheim, therefore, drew on the biological theory of Darwin in order to argue both that we are capable through science of understanding nature (including society), *and* in order to refute Spencer's assertion that evolution occurs through the unrestrained striving of individuals, in which the 'fittest' survive. Having used Darwin's theory in this manner, he then went to extraordinary lengths to refute its importance for social development. Social development may be the inevitable result of (biological and physical environmental) forces outside human control, but it does not follow from this, for Durkheim, either that human beings are bound to be competitive and self-interested (ibid: 204), or that we should not intervene in the process in order to ameliorate social conditions. Contrary to Darwinian theory, in which each new generation has different characteristics from the one before and consequently has no essential traits, and against Spencer's utilitarianism, which suggested that evolution occurs through the efforts of individuals to satisfy, self-interestedly, individual needs, Durkheim wanted to argue that there is one intrinsically unchanging human characteristic. This is that human beings are essentially 'moral' or social, and therefore co-operative rather than competitive.

The reader who comes to the *Division of Labour* uninitiated can be forgiven for wondering why - again and again - Durkheim insists that the division of labour does have a *moral* character, even though its progress is the result of biological and environmental, as well as social (dynamic density) forces with all the inevitability of necessity, and even though its result, 'civilisation', is in itself devoid of moral value? It is because, somewhat ironically, in view of the fact that it was Spencer who in 1852 coined the 'Darwinian' term 'survival of the fittest' (Peel, 1971:137), *Durkheim drew directly on Darwin in his attempt to refute this aspect of Spencer's theory* (Durkheim [1933] 1893): 266-270), but in doing so found himself in a bit of a mess, theoretically.

For political reasons, he wanted to argue for both social co-operation and individual autonomy, a position very close to that of Spencer himself. But Spencer's means to this social end - laissez-faire policy - was the very opposite of what Durkheim himself believed in. And once Durkheim had appealed to Darwin as a superior scientific authority, in order to refute Spencer, he then had to refute Darwin himself. This was not because, as Durkheim himself recognised, Darwin's position implies the inevitability of competition between individuals - in fact, this is not necessarily the case (see for example, Darwin, 1866 [1858]: 72-3). Rather it was because Darwin's theory implies that evolution occurs through causes that are internal to the individual (i.e. variation), thereby reducing the scope for effective political intervention and for a science whose area of study is dedicated to the discovery of the ideal conditions of *social* 'health'. This is why so much of his argument was concerned to show that the 'moral' nature of the division of labour is to be found in the 'social' needs that it fulfils.

In the last analysis, it seems, Durkheim himself found these arguments unconvincing. In the final pages of *The Division of Labour* he falls back on the assertion that the very 'essence' of humanity is morality:

> If there is one rule of conduct which is incontestable, it is that which orders us to realise in ourselves the essential traits of the collective type. . . .[This] is nothing else than the collective conscience of the group of which we are a part.(Durkheim, op cit: 396)

The collective conscience contains the moral rules, which 'enunciate the fundamental condition of social solidarity'.

> Everything which is a source of solidarity is moral, everything which forces man to take account of other men is moral, everything which forces him to regulate his conduct through something other than the striving of his ego is moral, and morality is as solid as these ties are numerous and strong. (ibid: 398)

For Durkheim, then, social morality was the essential characteristic of humanity. This, of course, is entirely unobjectionable in itself, but it does not make human beings any the less dependent on their natural environments. In the course of weaving together, in

the *Division of Labour*, a number of different aims - the refutation of Spencer, the attempt to carve out a bounded subject matter for sociology, and the attempt to claim for it the status of a *science* of 'moral life' - Durkheim utilised an argument (Darwin's) that was wholly at odds with the latter two aims. He was then forced, in spite of his explicit statement to the contrary, to deny the importance of heredity actively working in a physical environment, and focus on the role of the social or cultural environment in evolution. One result is that his his theory reads as if the division of labour makes humanity *exempt* from natural constraints by allowing many more to exist than would have otherwise survived (Durkheim, 1933 [1893]: 270-271).

Durkheim and the Institutionalisation of French Sociology

The Durkheimian conception of sociology was not, of course, the only possibility in late nineteenth century France - others attempting to define and establish sociology in an academic context included the Le Playists, the statisticians, and René Worms. That it was Durkheimian sociology, and only Durkheimian sociology, that became established in the university system, was due not only to his outstanding intellectual and personal qualities, but to a number of other inter-related factors, including changes in the structure of the French University system, and the need for political consolidation in the Third Republic.

France was not particularly stable, politically, in the century following the Revolution. Although, like Britain, it has been held up as an example of a successful parliamentary democracy in which revolutionary ideas had become orthodox (Joll, 1983), the political situation remained volatile, a fact illustrated by the Dreyfus affair of 1898 (Wright, 1981; McMillan, 1985). Perhaps partly as a result, the French economy had remained stagnant for the greater part of the century. Although France was still, for the greater part of the century, the second largest industrial nation - experiencing a sharp upturn in industrial activity around the turn of the century - its position had declined to fourth by 1914 (Wright, 1981; Kemp, 1985). Political stability, therefore was a major concern for the Third Republic, established after the French defeat in the

Franco-Prussian war, the fall of the second empire, the bloody days of the Paris Commune and the loss of Alsace Lorraine. Part of the blame for the French defeat appeared to lie with the outdated education system, which led to the establishment of the École Libre des Sciences Politiques, as an institution for training government officials, diplomats and journalists (Oberschall, 1972: 154). The Primary Education Law of 1882 was another response, under which a free, non-religious education was to be provided for all aged between 6 and 13. This led to the expansion of the number of students and the opening of new schools.

The liberation of education from Catholicism, however, left a 'moral' or 'civic' gap, which had to be addressed by the educational authorities. Whether or not it was a mere coincidence, Durkheim - following a conversation with the director of education Louis Liard - was appointed as *chargé de cours* at Bordeaux in 1887, to fill that gap. There, he rose rapidly to be a recognised authority on 'ethics and public morality', and was appointed *Professeur de Science Sociale* in 1896. In the same year he founded the *Année Sociologique* (ibid: 155). Its first volume appeared in 1898.

The *Année*, and Durkheim's approach to its day-to-day administration as well as to the foundation of sociology as an academic subject, were significant factors in the insitutionalisation of Durkheimian sociology. In giving sociology a broad definition as a synthesising discipline, which encompassed the relevant aspects of a range of other social science disciplines (rather than, as did Worms and Tarde, a narrow definition as the philosophy of the social sciences), Durkheim was able to gather round him a significant number of talented and well qualified individuals. By contrast, the Le Playists designated the work of their own school *Social Science*, thus severely limiting its number of acknowledged practitioners. For them, the title 'sociology' belonged only to work which built on that of Comte (ibid: 158).

Durkheim's success was also due to his professional approach. The structure of the 'cluster' around the *Année* was similar to that of Wilhelm Wundt's research institute in Germany (of which Durkheim had had direct experience (Lukes, 1975)), but organised in a more rigidly hierarchical and authoritarian manner. Its primary goal was

the compilation and review of useful sociological publications. The division of labour between the collaborators was intended to overcome superficiality, while Durkheim's own *Rules of Sociological Method* and personal involvement set the scientific and academic standard. The *Année* simultaneously served other, less obvious functions, however, in particular the recruitment and training of new talent. Unity and continuity were ensured, at least in part, by the fact that Durkheim personally revised and corrected all the proofs, returning them to their authors before they were finally sent to the printer (ibid: 169). Intellectual integration was further enhanced by the Dreyfus affair of 1898, in which Durkheim played a central role, and where many of the *Année* collaborators were also Dreyfusards.

Political and intellectual 'fitness', therefore, combined with Durkheim's own 'authoritarian' personality and his ability to draw others into the cluster around the *Année* via his conception of sociology as a synthesising science, ensured that Durkheimian sociology would survive where other conceptions perished institutionally. Moreover, recent evidence indicates that one way in which Durkheim warded off threats to the intellectual dominance of his own school was to absorb them. On at least one occasion this involved taking up an area he had previously dealt with and dismissed: social morphology. His treatment of 'social morphology', on which rests his status as a precursor of classical human ecology, appears to have been largely instrumental, aimed at the absorption of the human geography of Vidal de la Blache and his school, which constituted a threat to the supremacy of the Durkheimians (Mucchielli & Robic, 1995: 120).

Social Morphology and Human Geography

Durkheim's reputation as a precursor of human ecology rests on his 'morphological' analysis of societal types in the *Division of Labour*. There he suggested that the *cause* of the division of labour, the function of which was to mitigate the struggle for existence, was the disappearance of the segmentary type of society, caused in turn by increased physical and moral density. Settled agriculture, the growth of towns and

cities, economic development, and increases in communications and transport technology were all symptoms or symbols of the degree of density of a society (1933 [1893]: Chapter II)

In 1895, in *The Rules of Sociological Method*, Durkheim argued that social facts were of two kinds. The first type of social facts were ways of acting, thinking and feeling external to the individual, 'which are invested with a coercive power by virtue of which they exercise control over him' (Durkheim, 1982 [1895]: 53). The second type were 'collective ways of being, namely, social facts of an 'anatomical' or morphological nature' (ibid: 57). This sort of fact consisted of such things as

> the number and nature of the elementary parts which constitute society, the way in which they are articulated, the degree of coalescence they have obtained, the distribution of population over the earth's surface, the extent and nature of communications, the design of dwellings, etc. . . (Durkheim, 1982 [1895]: 57)

These 'ways of being', which correspond to the social facts outlined in *The Division of Labour* as visible symbols of the degree of density, may have a 'physical' or 'geographical' basis, but since they are 'only ways of acting that have been consolidated', they were subject to the same rules concerning generality, exteriority and constraint, as other social facts (ibid: 57-59). To admit their existence, therefore, was not to claim them as an area for separate study - the difference between a moral rule and an architectural form was a difference merely of degree and not of kind.

> Both are forms of life at varying stages of crystallisation. It would undoubtedly be advantageous to reserve the term 'morphological' for those social facts which relate to the social substratum, but only on condition that one is aware the they are of the same nature as the others. (Durkheim, 1982 [1895]: 59)

'Social morphology', in the *Rules*, became a way of classifying human societies as social species on an evolutionary scale, from the most basic of human groups, the single segment or 'clan' (formed from an association of undifferentiated 'hordes'), to the most complex civilisations, in which a 'complete coalescence of the initial segments takes place' (ibid: 112-115). Durkheim's rules for the constitution of social types

explicitly stated that social species were identifiable by their 'organisational' patterns, but did not mention physical - geographical, geological, or climatic - factors. It does not seem to have occurred to him that these necessarily have some bearing on cultural and organisational patterns at various points in a society's history, as limiting or enabling factors in the acquisition of social necessities via the availability, accessibility, ease of cultivation or exploitation of such life-sustaining resources as food, water, building materials and fuel.

There need not be any continuity between one social species and another, Durkheim said, since they were formed by the mixing of 'clans', rather than, as with the biological organism, through reproduction. There was no 'internal force' of heredity operating to preserve social characteristics, so that when two or more social species combined to form another, the result, as a rule, was another new species with an 'entirely fresh organisational pattern' (ibid: 116). This contrast between the biological and the social illustrates, yet again, both how Durkheim felt obliged to engage with Darwinian theory and the extent to which his understanding was limited. Yet he was concerned above all to refute its application to social evolution. Neither physical environment, nor individual or 'social' heredity were relevant factors in sociological analysis, which was limited to the discovery and explanation of *social* facts by other social facts. People were a part of nature, but the relationship between the two was always mediated by society (Mucchielli & Robic, 1995: 111).[7]

Thus, when the first edition of the *Année Sociologique* appeared in 1898, 'Socio-geographie' was relegated to the category of 'miscellaneous' (*'Divers'*), in its catalogue of sociological specialisms (ibid: 109). Durkheim's critique of Ratzel's political geography was the trigger for its marginalisation.[8] He was quite clear about the nature of his dissatisfaction with Ratzel's geography. 'The primary fact is social

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7 Durkheim put his 'rules' into practice a few years later, in *Suicide* (1952 [1895]), in which he argues against 'cosmic' explanations of suicide (Book 1, Chapter 3).

8 Ratzel's geography postulated a direct 'mystic' bond between the people and the land (Bramwell, 1989: 61; Mucchielli & Robic, op cit: 110-111).

organisation and not the way in which people use the earth, the latter depends on the former, far more than the reverse.'[9] (Mucchielli & Robic, 1995: 112; see also Rhein, 1982: 245).

From 1899, however, human geography became a category in its own right, under the name 'morphologie sociale'. Its re-instatement followed Vidal de la Blache's own 1898 critique of Ratzel, and his accession to the Chair formerly occupied by the historian A. Himly at the Sorbonne, thus firmly establishing geography in the University (Mucchielli and Robic, 1995: 120). Durkheim introduced this new category by explaining that it was made up of different areas. Geography studied territorial forms, history the evolution of urban and rural groups, and demography the distribution of population. Combined under the rubric 'morphologie sociale' Durkheim suggested, these disciplines could be rescued from their isolation and 'unified' (Mucchielli and Robic, 1995: 113; Rhein, 1982: 245). Thus, it was Vidal de la Blache's success at establishing geography as an academic subject at university level that prompted Durkheim to give 'morphologie sociale' its own place in the *Année*.

On the basis of Durkheim's social morphology - as developed in *The Rules of Sociological Method* - there are no grounds for the suggestion that Durkheim has a basic 'human ecology' in anything other than a purely 'sociologistic' sense - a sense which excludes the natural or physical environment as a significant factor in either social structure or function (a fact which *is* acknowledged by Schnore, 1958: 620-628). By contrast, Vidal de la Blache's (1926) *Principles of Human Geography* offers a 'new conception of the inter-relationships between the earth and man' which resulted from 'a more synthetic knowledge of the physical laws governing our earth and of the relations between the living beings which inhabit it' (1926: 4). It has chapters on population distribution and density, physical environment, food, building materials (in

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9 My translation. The original reads 'La critique de Durkheim est éminemment pertinente, elle marque nettement, la différence entre morphologie sociale et géographie sociale, elle affirme que le fait primordial c'est la façon dont les humaines sont organisés en société et non la manière dont ils occupent le sol, cette dernière dépendent de la première bien plus que l'inverse'.

different climates), and means of transportation as factors affecting both social structure and social evolution.

Although Durkheim continued to discuss 'physical' factors in social structure - sometimes as though he believed in their relevance, and social morphology was elevated (at least for a time), in the *Année*, to the status of a section in its own right, his motives for doing so seem to have been more concerned with academic rivalry and the professional status of his school, than with a genuine recognition of the importance of physical factors as enabling or constraining particular social forms or functions.

Towards an Alternative Strategy

Neither 'Exuberance' nor 'Re-Interpretation' as strategies for explaining the neglect of environmental issues in the history of sociology are quite adequate, therefore. Catton's strategy of exuberance can not account for the existence of a number of neglected early works of environmental sociologists (see above, p.26). Nor do the attempts by Schnore (1958), Catton (1976) or Buttel (1986) to re-interpret Durkheim's sociology in environmental terms quite work, once factors external to the theory itself are taken into account.

Re-interpretations of Durkheim and others by contemporary environmental sociologists are of interest in their own right, however, since the very attempt to 're-interpret' the classics is an instance of the recent development of a heightened reflexivity among sociologists in general, some of whom are beginning to at least discuss the application of the insights of their own discipline (in particular, insights from the sociology of knowledge) to that discipline itself (for example Levine, 1995; Hopper, 1995; Mouzelis, 1997; Parker, 1997). This constitutes an acknowledgement of the fact that the classical sociological tradition has been less intellectually self-evident (Shils, 1971) than has often been supposed, but rests on particular interpretations of the work of the 'founding fathers'. Consequently, other interpretations are seen to be possible, and the European 'founders' *can* be seen to be concerned with issues to do with the relations between humanity and its 'natural'

environment, even if they were motivated quite differently than their contemporary counterparts.

This sort of reflexivity is not at all new, of course. In the post-war period especially, sociologists have engaged, intermittently, in re-examining, re-defining, and re-interpreting 'founders' of sociology.[10] What is new, however, is the attempt to assess their treatment of the 'environment', or the relations between humanity and nature as a result of a generalised heightened awareness of environmental issues both in and outside academic sociology. It may also be, in part, an effort to claim or retain some kind of conceptual 'unity' for an imagined sociological 'community' (Becker, 1979: 24; Levine, 1995).

Whatever its origin or rationale, the attempt to ground environmental sociology in the work of the European classical thinkers may be insufficiently reflexive in accepting a severely attenuated form of sociology's intellectual heritage - considering only the sociological ideas which have been formally recognised and legitimated through institutionalisation. Since Comte first coined the word, there has been a wide range of thinkers who have either claimed the title 'sociology' for their work, or who have had that title awarded to it by others, sometimes retrospectively. In France, these included the Le Playists, whose sociology was based on the study of 'the working class family, the locality it inhabits and the social constitution by which it is governed' (Le Play, cited in Nisbet, 1967: 62). Although the study of locality, or 'place', gave Le Play's sociology a dimension that was missing from Durkheim's (in spite of its inadequacy in other respects), it has remained marginal (and is sometimes even absent) in the history of the discipline as a whole.

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10 These are too numerous to list exhaustively. Some examples include Nisbet's (1967) *The Sociological Tradition*; Aron's (1965, 1967) *Main Currents in Sociological Theory*; Bottomore and Nisbet's (1979) *A History of Sociological Analysis*; Swingewood's (1984) *A Short History of sociological Thought*; and Hughes, Martin and Sharrock (1995) *Understanding Classical Sociology*.

Since its earliest attempt at institutionalisation, the scope of what is legitimately recognised as sociology has undergone a continual process of expansion and contraction. The most obvious and overt example of this can be seen in Parsons's (1937) extreme limitation of the field through the narrowing down of Sorokin's (1928) account of diverse sociological theories into a mere handful of thinkers, whose work he suggested consisted of contributions to a single theory. Beyond this, however, the limitation of the field has been carried on *covertly*, in the day-to-day practice of sociology by sociologists. It has been partly a function of the reception, inside institutions, of particular sets of ideas, theories and definitions of sociology. As Shils (1971) said, institutions create a 'resonant and echoing' intellectual environment. Significantly, institutions empower not just ideas, but also particular individuals, whose values, judgements and opinions thereby carry greater weight. Thus, although to a greater or lesser extent the theories which have survived in sociology have been those that are intellectually superior - they are intellectually superior in their own terms, which are inevitably bounded, or limited by the values and beliefs of their creators. Any particular theory of, for example, the 'functions' of the division of labour in society may be adequate in respect of its own terms of reference. It may, for example, address the problem of the relation between the individual and society, or the question of how a society of individuals can '*cohere*'; and in these terms it may be perfectly adequate. It only becomes less adequate, or inadequate, if the 'reader' or 'audience' to whom it is addressed, is inclined to believe in the central importance of the relations between societies and their natural 'environments', or the question of how a society of individuals can '*survive*' or maintain itself in the face of the finite resources it must necessarily consume. In this way, the self-evident intellectual superiority of an established theory may be called into question. By the same token, however, an established thinker or theory may effectively marginalise another, since the acceptance of a particular set of values (expressed either implicitly or explicitly in a theory) may appear to exclude the acceptance of alternatives.

Environmentalism and Politics

Lowe and Goyder have suggested that the three major periods of the articulation of environmentalist ideas - the 1890s, 1920s and late 1950s, have all been at the end of periods of sustained economic growth (1983: 16-17), though they acknowledge that there have been 'isolated examples of preservationist sentiment as far back as the Middle ages' (Lowe and Goyder, 1983. See also Worster, 1977; Merchant, 1980; Oelschlaeger, 1991). Environmentalism (formal and informal) is seen to involve a distinctive value system or orientation (Lowe and Goyder, 1983), which involves an implicit or explicit attitude to nature, and our relationship to it (Pepper, 1984). As Raymond Williams suggested, our ideas about what nature is, as a thing in itself, as well as whether we see ourselves as part of, or distinct from it, are part of the way in which we define ourselves, and what it means to be human. Moreover, 'what is often being argued', he suggests, 'in the idea of nature is the idea of man;. . . not only generally, or in ultimate ways, but the idea of man in society, indeed, the idea of kinds of societies' (1980:171).

Human ideas about nature, therefore, form part of a more general normative or political belief system. They have an ideological component. This suggests that there may be more involved in the articulation and reception of environmentalist ideas than merely a response to particular material (economic) conditions, or an awareness of resource limitations. In particular, if we accept that there have been recognisably 'environmentalist' values or social movements as far back in history as the middle ages (Lowe and Goyder) or even in 'pre-history' (Oelschlaeger), it suggests that the extent to which these values have achieved a public and political voice or impact, may be related as much to their acceptability in the context of existent (hegemonic) political conditions in particular times and places, as to other social and material conditions. This should not, however, be taken as an argument in favour of a 'constructivist' view either of 'nature' or environmental degradation. As New (1995), suggests, 'nature' or 'environment' has a 'real' existence which is independent of either the existence of

humanity, or of human representations or constructions of its 'nature' (or of the causes of environmental problems).

> So while claims about environmental threat and its societal causes are made within a discourse or set of discourses, they address, more or less adequately, a material threat whose present nature is independent of our *present* thinking, though it is partly the product of our past thinking . . . (New, 1995: 810)

Sociology and Politics

Both historically and in contemporary society 'the social sciences offer various more or less adequate accounts' of the nature of 'social reality' (ibid: 809). Whether or not these accounts are taken up, listened to, or perpetuated through institutionalisation may depend at least as much on factors external to sociology, including a dominant political ideology or value system as on the extent to which they are *adequate*.

To say this is to admit that Catton and Dunlap's assessment of the history of sociology is correct - but only up to a point. Their argument suggests that sociologists have until recently accepted unequivocally what they call 'the dominant western world view' which assumes that human beings are unique among all the inhabitants of the planet in respect of their cultural and technological capacities, and therefore released from the natural or ecological constraints to which other species are subject. It is likely, however, that what came to be understood as 'sociology' was the outcome of a process of disagreement and debate about the extent to which different accounts of social reality were more or less adequate, and that the sociological accounts of social reality which achieved dominance were not those which were 'more adequate' than the others in terms of their account of the natural basis of human societies or the interrelationships between human societies and their environments, but rather that which most accurately reflected the dominant political ideology of the time.

As New remarks, the nature of the current ecological crisis represents (at least partly) the outcome of past thinking, and 'its future nature is likely to be affected by how we think (and act) now' (ibid: 810). This is to beg a question about the definition, role and purpose of contemporary sociology. Nisbet has pointed out that however

much the classical sociologists cloaked their ideas in the language of objectivity, their work invariably had its roots in moral aspiration (1967: 18). This remains true of sociology today, with the significant difference that where the early sociologists often worked against a societal background in which sociology either did not exist, officially, or had little influence *outside Universities* due to its small institutional base (as well as public and 'official' suspicion of the subject), in the period since the Second World War it has expanded institutionally and, in general, become more 'acceptable' to people outside the university system. Contemporary sociology's role extends beyond the academy into both the political and public realm.

If, as has been suggested, contemporary sociology is not just about society but in some part helps to constitute it, through its contribution to the institutional reflexivity of modernity (Giddens, 1991b: 2), two important questions follow. The first is the question of the adequacy of various contemporary accounts of the nature of social reality. The second is the question of the extent to which it is not the *adequacy* of accounts, but their *correspondence with a dominant value system or political ideology* which is decisive for their general acceptance, popularity and (social and political) influence. Even if the current assessment of the nature and scope of the 'ecological crisis' is only partially accurate, these issues have an urgent relevance for contemporary sociology.

Since the ecological crisis is simultaneously a social crisis and a socially *created* crisis, and sociology claims to be the academic and practical discipline whose concern is with the nature, problems and amelioration of social life, then any sociology that it worthy of the name must grapple seriously with the issue of the social creation of the crisis as well as with potential social solutions.

Sociology, Reflexivity, and the Adequacy of Accounts[11]

A radical view of the role of sociology is that its role is essentially subversive. Sociology, according to this view, aims to get beneath the surface appearance of the world to discover 'what is really going on' out there [12] - whether or not what it discovers corresponds to or complements either popular (common sense) or more formally expressed political (ideological) accounts of social reality. This idea of sociology's role requires a more thorough-going 'reflexivity' than that inherent in the idea that sociology is part of modernity's inherent reflexivity (ie. the perpetual surveillance of social institutions by other social institutions) - which itself derives from the use of the concept of 'reflexivity' as it has come to be defined by sociologists. To be 'reflexive' is in one sense merely to be 'self-referential' (Abercrombie, 1988). For the ethnomethodologists on whom Giddens draws it is also in some way 'constitutive' of social contexts or situations, and may 'reproduce' or 'transform' them (Jary and Jary, 1991).

While there is nothing wrong with these definitions in themselves, it should be pointed out that there is a potential difference between reflexivity as 'self-referentiality' and reflexivity as 'self-awareness'. Both definitions are implicit in an ordinary (non-academic) dictionary definition of reflexive as 'implying action by the subject upon itself' (Garmondsway, 1979). Certainly, all sociological accounts are self-referential to the extent that they are a part of the social world that studies the social world (or its parts). Not all sociological accounts, however, are self-aware. Reflexivity as 'self-

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11 This discussion of reflexivity attempts to avoid getting bogged-down in some of the more extreme and complex contemporary debates about the role of reflexivity in the sociology of (scientific) knowledge. These are exemplifed both in and by Ashmore's (1989) *The Reflexive Thesis*. I came across Ashmore's book only *after* I had written the above, and felt that nothing positive would be added to the argument by engaging in a detailed consideration of the problem of the 'reflexivity of reflexivity', and its implications for the (meta-) status of (sociological) knowledge.

12 In his introductory textbook, Martin Joseph (1986: 5) put this clearly by suggesting that the role of the sociologist is to 'try to "stand outside ourselves" and our society . . . to examine our taken for granted world: to examine and criticise what passes for common sense'.

awareness' is primarily a methodological tool, which has most recently become associated with feminist research processes, but was almost equally well-described by C. Wright Mills' term 'the sociological imagination':

> It is the capacity to range from the most impersonal and remote transformation to the most intimate features of the human self - and to see the relations between the two. . . . it is by means of the sociological imagination that [people] now hope to grasp what is going on in the world, and to understand what is happening in themselves as minute points of the intersections of biography and history within society (1959: 7)

A radical or subversive reflexivity involves a radical definition of sociology's role (to get underneath appearances to discover 'what is really going on'); and it involves methodological reflexivity (the open acknowledgement that sociologists are themselves historically situated, both personally and 'institutionally'). At the level of theory, it involves recognising that (theories or) accounts of social reality are themselves historically situated social 'products'.

If followed to its (logically extreme) ends, of course, this position is in danger of sliding into an endless relativism, where no account can lay claim to superiority, because all are equally social products. All that is being argued here, however, is that it is necessary to distinguish between the adequacy of an account of social reality, and its academic or social status. In institutionalised academic sociology, as in society, there exists what Becker (1967) has called a 'hierarchy of credibility'.

> In any system of ranked groups, participants take it as given that members of the highest group have the right to define the way things really are . . . those at the top have access to a more complete picture of what is going on than anyone else. Members of lower groups will have incomplete information, and their view of reality will be partial and distorted in consequence. Therefore . . . any tale told by those at the top intrinsically deserves to be regarded as the most credible account obtainable of the organisation's workings. And since . . . matters of rank and status are contained in the mores, this belief has a moral quality. We are. . . morally bound to accept the definition imposed on reality by a superordinate group in preference to the definitions espoused by subordinates . . . Thus, credibility and the right to be heard are differentially distributed through the ranks of the system. (Becker, 1967: 241)

While it may not be true of sociology as an institution that its members *unquestioningly* 'take it as given' that those in positions of power have the right to pronounce upon the adequacy of different accounts of social reality, a hierarchy nevertheless exists. Those at the top do have a greater capacity to define *what counts as knowledge* than those lower down. Moreover, as an institution, sociology is not free from external constraints, but is embedded in the wider society, in a largely dependent role, since, as Nicolaus (1972: 50) points out, the salaries of the people called sociologists come from outside the discipline itself. Of course,

> The sociology of knowledge cautions us to distinguish between the truth of a statement and an assessment of the circumstances under which the statement is made; though we trace an argument to its source in the interests of the person who made it, we have still not proved it false. (Becker, 1967: 240)

A subversive reflexivity that keeps in mind this distinction at the level of theory is unlikely to slide into an extreme relativism.

Overall, a subversively reflexive radical sociology involves, first, a recognition that a sociology that is merely 'self-referential' cannot provide an adequate account of the relations between social reality and its 'natural' environment. The societies which are the subject matter of sociology are not simply 'social orders' but are ultimately 'natural' orders which are dependent on the existence of life-sustaining resources (both matter and energy). The availability of resources in turn becomes at least partially dependent on the social order, though this was not so in the first instance. Thus the continued existence, maintenance and development of societies and their 'natural' environments are profoundly interconnected (Williams, 1980). Second, a subversive reflexivity requires the recognition that there may be a difference between accounts of social reality that have a 'constitutive' or 'reproductive' role and those which have a 'transformative' potential (leaving on one side the question of qualitative differences inherent in different 'transformative' potentials). This is to say that sociologists must recognise the possibility that any theory or account of social reality whose popular appeal lies in the fact that it appears to be an accurate reflection of 'what is really going

on' may be itself little more than a reflection or symptom of the social reality it attempts to describe or explain. In this sense, a sociology that 'in some part helps to constitute' social reality may be not much more than ideology, where ideology is understood, following Pareto, as 'derivations': rationalisations based on non-logical or sentimental beliefs (residues) which serve to justify particular (social or individual) activities (Jary and Jary, 1991; Parsons ([1937] 1968a: 199).

The converse of this is that sociologists need to be aware of the possibility that a description or explanation of social reality that is apparently at odds with our everyday understanding of the world *may still claim to be an adequate account of social reality*, although such an account may not be 'constitutive' of it, in so far as it is an account that conflicts with a dominant ideology or system of beliefs, and is therefore not taken into consideration by either individuals or collectivities in the course of their day to day activities. The 'transformative' potential of an account of social reality which is (more) adequate in terms of its depiction of societal-environment relations may remain limited by a number of things, including its complexity, unfamiliarity or lack of an immediate appeal, in respect of particular interests that are perceived to be general, i.e. they are perceived to be the interests of an entire community, nation state, or group of nations. Importantly, the transformative potential of a radically subversive sociological account of the nature of social reality may be limited for reasons which have nothing to do with its adequacy, but precisely because it constitutes a challenge not just to competing sociological accounts, but also to the hegemony of existing political ideas.

For sociologists, a subversive reflexivity must also acknowledge the fact that sociology itself has been embedded, historically, in the societies it has theorised and observed. This involves more than the recognition that the sociologist can only work with already existent lay concepts, so that there is continual slippage between the sociological use of a concept and its lay meaning (the 'double hermeneutic'), but insists that neither sociologists as individuals nor sociology in its institutional forms either are, or have been, immune to prevailing social and political conditions in the societies of

which they are part. Thus suggests not only that sociologists can never be value free - a statement so commonplace as to be unremarkable - but neither are sociology's social or institutional forms. And these have been at least as important as the adequacy of its theoretical or empirical accounts of social reality for the definition, role and purpose of sociology.

> Institutions create a resonant and echoing intellectual environment. The sociological ideas which undergo institutionalisation are thereby given a greater weight in the competition of interpretations of social reality. (Shils, 1971: 762)

Sociology as Social Life

As Levine (1995:1) reminds us, the social sciences play a dual role: 'they study human behaviour and they exhibit it'. At the level of everyday life and professional practice, sociologists recognise (even if only implicitly) that the reception, acceptance or rejection of particular ideas or theories can often be effected by considerations that are not merely academic or intellectual. Power differentials inside academic institutions, personalities and inter-personal skills, professional jealousy, competition for posts, and the ability or commitment to 'networking' can all be factors in success or failure. Nor is academic life insulated from the social and political conditions outside the institution. The response of mass medias, or governments and others responsible for academic funding, can be crucially important for the development and public recognition of particular work, and therefore the careers and life chances of sociologists as members of society. Yet although all this is known by sociologists to apply at the level of their day-to-day lives, it is rarely acknowledged in histories of sociology, which tend to be histories of ideas which have been formally recognised. In this way, histories of sociology can in fact contribute to the process of legitimation and ultimately canonisation.

Dunlap and Cattons (1979) re-examinination of the wider history of sociology which found evidence of the existence of (neglected examples of) environmental sociology in works other than 'classics' (see above p26) involves both the tacit

acceptance of the existence of a 'hierarchy of credibility' (historically) *and* the attempt to redefine what counts as sociological knowledge (now). Simply by drawing attention to a number of neglected works of 'environmental sociology', they raise a question about the sorts of processes that lead to particular sets of ideas taking precedence over others.

This sort of re-examination of the history of sociology can, however, also function to explain away the problem of how sociology developed with its peculiarly one-sided definition of 'environment' as social or cultural environment, which excludes the physical or natural environment. Hannigan's (1995) account of the neglect of the natural or physical environment, for example, argues that the exclusion of physical environment from sociology results from the geographic and biological determinist theories of two British thinkers, Thomas Henry Buckle and Herbert Spencer. In doing so, his account neglects to mention another early British 'environmental' sociologist, Patrick Geddes, whose work was neither geographically, nor biologically determinist, although he did give both environment and heredity a role in social evolution.

Hannigan's account, admittedly, focusses on the influence of these theories in America, rather than in Britain. Spencer's, of course, is a household name in sociology. Although his work is no longer much studied (and he is mostly excluded from the roll call of classical 'founding fathers' of modern sociology), he is remembered as one of the first whose work called itself sociology, for the enormous popularity of his work in the nineteenth century, and for his unacceptable Utilitarianism. By contrast, Buckle's work is almost completely forgotten. Why then, does Buckle appear in Hannigan's account, while Geddes, (perhaps almost equally forgotten, but not exclusively 'geographical determinist') does not?

Buckle's work, says Hannigan, was 'widely read and quite influential', used by the economist T. N. Carver in his course at Harvard even before that University had a formal department of sociology. Also, one American 'founder', Sumner, had developed an interest in Buckle, developed during his years at Oxford University (Hannigan, 1995: 6). Hannigan's account of Buckle as an influence on Sumner draws on

Bierstedt's (1981) *American Sociological Theory: A Critical History.*[13] His account of Buckle's work draws on a 1976 revised edition of Timasheff's 1955 *Sociological Theory: its Nature and Growth* (Timasheff and Theordorson, 1976). Buckle achieved a place in the history of American Sociology via Sorokin's (1928) *Contemporary Sociological Theories*, perhaps as a result of his inclusion in Carver's courses (Carver and Sorokin almost certainly corresponded at some time around these years (Sorokin, 1963: 225)). Timasheff, another Russian emigré, friend and colleague of Sorokin's from his university days before the Revolution (Sorokin, 1963: 88), leaned heavily on Sorokin's definition of the field, for his own book (Timasheff, 1967 [1955]: 8; Sorokin, 1956 [1928]: 760-761).[14] Geddes, by contrast with Buckle, appears nowhere in Sorokin's book (and hence not in Timasheff's), although there is one reference each to his colleagues Victor Branford and J.A. Thomson.[15] Perhaps, in such a compendious work, Sorokin's oversight seems trivial. Yet many of the sociologists who were deemed worthy of inclusion in his textbook are now marginal and forgotten figures (where Geddes, in spite of his generalised exclusion from *sociology*, is not (see, for example, Meller, 1990; Novak, 1995)). Additionally, there is some evidence that Geddes did have a small influence on the development of American sociology (see below, Chapter 2). But as a consequence of his exclusion from accounts of early history of American sociology by Sorokin, then Timasheff, then Bierstedt, Geddes' name was not available to Hannigan, when he wrote his account in 1995. This illustrates the extent to which the institutionalisation of particular sociologies and sociologists has the capacity to effectively marginalise or exclude others, via personal allegiances as well as textbooks of sociology, the construction of histories of sociology and the establishment of a 'hierarchy of credibility'.

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13 Bierstedt was a student of Sorokin's during his Harvard years (Coser, 1977).

14 Timasheff quietly took Sorokin's part in the rivalry between Sorokin and Parsons (Timasheff, 1967 [1955]: especially 248; Sorokin 1966: 420-431).

15 The reference to Branford is to his (1918) obituary and Review of Durkheim. The reference to Thomson (mis-spelled Thompson) is to the 1917 American edition of his (1909) *Darwinism and Human Life*.

An alternative strategy for accounting for the neglect of environment in sociology, then, needs to be radically reflexive, by maintaining an awareness of the inter-relations between sociological ideas and theories, sociology's institutional forms, sociology as the social life of its practitioners, and the social and political conditions in which all of these are embedded. In the chapter which follows, therefore, an account of Patrick Geddes' sociological work is preceded by a brief account of the social, economic, political, and environmental context of the years around the turn of the century in Britain. It was against this background that sociology became established as an academic discipline in Britain, a process in which Geddes, initially, played a major part. The story of the foundation of sociology as an academic discipline, and Geddes' exclusion, is told in Chapter Three.

Chapter 2.

Patrick Geddes as Environmental Sociologist

Introduction

Patrick Geddes makes only rare appearances in contemporary sociology. When he is discussed at all, it is usually only for his role in the establishment of sociology in Britain - a role that is generally understood to have been, in the end, a negative one. His work, to the extent that it is mentioned at all by sociologists, tends to be associated with the development of Town Planning, and it is for *Cities in Evolution* (1915) that he is most commonly remembered.[1] Geddes, however, made his earliest forays into the new subject of sociology in the early 1880s, attempting to map out the scope and definition of the new subject - on the basis of his reading of Comte and Spencer - before even Durkheim. His early work is not well-known. Yet it is only on the basis of this work that an assessment of Geddes' sociology can properly be made, since it constitutes the theoretical and epistemological foundation of all his subsequent work. Consequently, two early papers (Geddes, 1881, 1884) form the basis of discussion of Geddes' work, though his later work is also mentioned where relevant. The chapter begins with brief accounts of the historical context in which he worked and of his early life and character, and ends with an attempt to assess his significance for both classical human ecology and the 'new' human ecology associated with Catton and Dunlap. No attempt is made to assess the extent of Geddes' influence on the American sociologist Lewis Mumford (but see Mumford, in Novak, 1995: 353-372).

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1 The *Collins Dictionary of Sociology* (Jary and Jary, 1991) has no entry under Geddes. The term 'conurbation' however, is attributed to Geddes, and *Cities in Evolution* appears in the bibliography.

Historical Context: Conditions in Late Nineteenth Century Britain

The contrast between the British experience of industrialisation and that of America, France and Germany cannot be drawn too strongly. Not only had Britain's population grown exponentially (unlike that of France) during the course of the nineteenth century (without, as in America, a correspondingly large geographical area to expand into), but so had its means of industrial production. Yet where Germany's more recent industrial growth was largely state-directed, and had the advantage of being able to utilise the most up-to-date technology, Britain's was unplanned and haphazard (Peel, 1971: 240-241). As Kemp (1985) suggests, Britain was the industrial pioneer. Moreover, perhaps because it depended on the private initiative of individuals, investment in new and possibly cleaner technologies was delayed, so that by the 1890s, not only was Britain's position as the industrial capital of the world under threat, the environmental 'side-effects' (Beck 1992) or impacts of industrialisation and its accompanying urbanisation were, in many cities, but particularly in London, highly visible.

Environmental Conditions

Atmospheric pollution in urban Britain was at its height in the last two decades of the nineteenth century: 'in 1881-5 it lost a sixth of the sun it might have enjoyed in a state of nature'. (Clapp, 1994: 14) Most, though not all, of this pollution was caused by industry (boilers, blast furnaces, coke ovens, pottery kilns and so on), which was careless in its use of coal. Another major cause was the steam driven railway engine (ibid: 21), while in any urban area the smoke from domestic fires was also problematic. The design of grates and chimneys was often inefficient,[2] and it was this which prompted the formation of the Coal Smoke Abatement Society in 1898.[3] Attempts to

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2 The continental stove, much more efficient than an open fire in terms of the ratio of useful heat to fuel consumption, was ignored by commissioners appointed to report on the heating and ventilation of dwellings. Englishmen (apparently) 'preferred fresh air to warmth' and stoves 'tended to make a room stuffy' (Clapp, 1994: 17). Small wonder that the English invited the derision of the efficient Germans!

legislate for the control of smoke were largely ineffective throughout the nineteenth century, partly due to the difficulties of enforcing the legislation, and partly to a lack of enthusiasm for the cause. The Metropolitan Police, charged with the job of enforcing smoke control in London, achieved over a thousand convictions between 1877 and 1881, but the fines were so small that a conviction was unlikely to be a deterrent (ibid. 32-4).

Other causes of atmospheric pollution came from alkali manufacture, which produced as 'by-products' hydrochloric acid and, less dangerously, calcium sulphide. In spite of the fact that a means of reducing the production of hydrochloric acid had been patented as early as 1836, very few manufacturers took up the system, and those that did often allowed the weakly acidic solution produced to drain away into the nearest river, instead of finding a use for it, thus simply transferring the pollution from air to water (ibid: 24).

Organic pollutants (including, perhaps especially, human waste), were widely perceived to be problematic in urban areas, by local authorities as well as Poor Law reformers and members of the medical profession, as early as the 1830s. The traditional way to deal with organic pollutants was the ash-pit, into which went the 'night-soil', rotting vegetables, bones, and fat. Although galvanised dustbins came into use during the 1880s, and the installation of 'water closets' was gradually increased after the completion of London's trunk sewers in 1864, some ashpits remained in use up to the first world war and beyond. They were not forbidden in new buildings until the 1930s (ibid: 27-29).

Urban water supplies for drinking were largely secured by the late part of the nineteenth century, by drawing them from the upper reaches of the Thames, from

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3 The Coal Smoke Abatement Society was itself the result of a smoke abatement committee formed in the 1880s on the inspiration of the National Health Society, (founded in 1873), and the Kyrle Society (founded in 1877) by Miranda and Octavia Hill 'to bring beauty home to the people' (cited in Clapp, 1994: 45)4 It was Spencer, in *Man versus the State* (1969 [1884]) who coined the phrase 'old liberalism'.

central Wales and the Peak and Lake Districts as well as from wells, dams and reservoirs. But the pollution of rivers further downstream became increasingly severe throughout the nineteenth century. Filth poured into them from factories as well as from the sewers

> . . . but an unsightly stream devoid of fish is not necessarily a threat to health. Events were to show that aesthetic and ecological arguments unsupported by public health considerations or a powerful body of opinion would not persuade local authorities to refrain from river pollution. (Clapp, 1994: 74)

All of this indicates that late nineteenth century Britain was experiencing what would now be described as an environmental 'crisis'. Moreover, it is clear that the causes of this crisis were social. In particular they were linked to the haphazard and unregulated nature of industrialisation, and a capitalist political and economic system that was as reluctant to intervene against the capitalists' despoilation of the environment as they were to intervene to ensure either the health of the labouring population or a more equitable distribution of the 'wealth' it created.

Economic, Social and Political Conditions

The period of the late nineteenth century was, of course, a time of economic, social and political as well as environmental 'crisis'. All four were profoundly inter-connected. As the first nation to industrialise, Britain had enjoyed a prolonged period of economic expansion up to the depression of the 1870s. Economic and imperial expansion went hand in hand with urbanisation and Britain's cities, in particular London, grew at an alarming rate. Increasingly, social conditions, including pollution, became a matter of both charitable and official concern. Chadwick's *Report on the Sanitary Conditions of the Labouring Population* was published in 1842 (Best, 1964), and Mayhew's *London Labour and the London Poor* in 1851 (Quennell, undated). After 1870, when Britain's industrial supremacy came increasingly under threat from other industrialising nations, most especially Germany, America and Japan, social conditions began to affect political stability. Economic and imperial expansion had both been factors in political

stability for most of the century, but as decline set in, the efficiency and capability of government and administration began to be questioned.

Nineteenth century governments adhered largely to the 'old' Liberalism[4] embodied in the idea of laissez-faire economics, of which Samuel Smiles, author of *Self Help* (1859), *Character* (1871), *Thrift* (1875), and *Duty* (1880), is often held up as an exemplar (Bellamy, 1992). As the titles of Smile's works indicate, old Liberalism involved an ideal of moral virtue as well as an economic ideal. Smiles summed up the prevailing ethos of the greater part of the nineteenth century when he wrote that 'National progress is the sum of individual industry, energy and uprightness as national decay is of individual idleness, selfishness and vice' (1859, [1925]: 3; cited in Bellamy, 1992: 11). By the late 1880s, however, social conditions were contributing to the breakdown of political consensus.

One major factor was poverty. Although living standards rose for many during the course of the nineteenth century, the distribution of income remained unequal. In 1867, 0.07% of the population had an annual income of £5,000 or more, while at the other end of the scale, 29% had an annual income of between £10.10s. and £36. This distribution had not changed significantly by 1900 (Thane, 1982: 4). The causes of poverty were primarily low pay, old age, ill health or widowhood, although unemployment and underemployment were also important.

The development of social science was another important factor in the breakdown of consensus. After Mayhew and Chadwick, other social investigators, in particular Booth and Rowntree, began to publish their findings, bringing the severity and extent of poverty to public attention. Booth's surveys in London, and Rowntree's in York were startlingly similar in their conclusions. Booth found that 30% of the inhabitants of London were poor - meaning that they had no surplus income above the barest of essentials for much of the time, with nothing left over in case of a crisis. Rowntree found that 10% of the people of York had earnings which were below his

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4 It was Spencer, in *Man versus the State* (1969 [1884]) who coined the phrase 'old liberalism'.

stringently defined poverty line, while another 17.93% remained poor in spite of an income above the poverty line, and continued to live in extremely squalid conditions (Thane, 1982: 5-7). Although Rowntree believed that poverty was often linked to 'immoral' behaviour (alcoholism, gambling), he also drew attention to poor environmental conditions as partly responsible for this. Drinking and gambling, he felt

> are themselves often the outcome of the adverse conditions under which too many of the working classes live. Housed for the most part in sordid streets, frequently in overcrowded and unhealthy conditions, compelled very often to earn their bread by monotonous and laborious work and unable, partly through limited education and partly through overtime and other causes of physical exhaustion, to enjoy intellectual recreation. (Rowntree, cited in Thane, 1982: 9)

The Boer War (1900-1902) was another important factor in the breakdown of political consensus. First, many potential recruits had to be turned away as a result of their malnourished condition, a fact which initially became known to the public in the form of rumour, but which becme 'official' when the figures were pulished in 1904 (Thane, 1982; Searle, 1971). Second, a number of administrative errors and inefficiencies in the conduct of the war caused widespread public despondency about the supremacy of the British nation, and raised doubts about the abilities of those in positions of power to administer effectively. As Shaw said 'Whatever else the war may do or undo, it at least turns its fierce searchlights on official, administrative and military perfunctoriness' (cited in Searle, 1971: 39). Thus, by highlighting the inefficiencies and failures of the political establisment, the war became a factor in both the rise of the new 'social reformist' Liberalism (of which Leonard Hobhouse was a principle exponent), and a contributory factor in the rise of the LSE, whose founder, Sidney Webb, was both a Fabian socialist and an advocate of efficiency.[5]

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5 An illustrated headline, which adorned a 1902 article on LSE, by Sidney Webb, proclaimed: 'London's New Weapon in the Struggle for Commerical Supremacy. The New School of Economics'. (*The Sphere*, 31st May, 1902, illustration in Dahrendorf, 1995, between pages 108 and 109).

The Boer war, Britain's declining world position, jealousy of Germany's rising industrial and social efficiency and the 'degenerate' condition of the masses were all contributory factors in the rise of the ideologies of both nationalism *per se*, and National Efficiency. The latter was not a homogenous political ideology, but had wide cross-party appeal (Searle, 1971: 54). Germany and Japan became the models to be followed, though the Japanese, as Britain's allies from 1902, did not inspire the same jealousy and fear as did the Germans. National efficiency could mean administrative, industrial, military or social efficiency, a concern with the improvement of the 'national physique', or with ensuring that those in positions of power were appropriately educated (the 'cult of the expert') (ibid: 60-80; Freeden, 1978: 177-85). For some it meant that government should be based on an awareness of the social implications of scientific knowledge, or should be run according to the principles of good commercial business (Searle, 1971: 83-92). Most worryingly perhaps, and linked with the intellectual atmosphere of the rise of Darwinian science - which was as central in Britain as elsewhere - national efficiency sometimes came to mean 'racial progress' (ibid: 96). Calls for a variety of social policies could be, and were, justified by an appeal to 'efficiency' by conservatives, socialists and liberals alike. Francis Galton's new 'science' of 'Eugenics' - which appeared to be a realistic proposition for some people, in the wake of the re-discovery of Mendelian genetics in 1900, would be an important factor in the establishment and development of sociology in Britain. Its political appeal, like that of national efficiency, was broad. It attracted, at different times, A.J. Balfour, Neville Chamberlain, J.B.S. Haldane, Harold Laski,[6] and J.M. Keynes (Searle, 1976: 12-14). Even those who never went so far as to become members of the Eugenics Education Society, and were otherwise genuinely liberal, like J.A. Hobson, could be found insisting that

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6 Dahrendorf (1995: 224) suggests that Laski's interest in eugenics was 'kindled' by his wife, Frida.

> Selection of the fittest, or at least, rejection of the unfittest, is essential to all progress in life and character. . . To abandon the production of children to unrestricted private enterprise is the most dangerous abnegation of its functions which any government can practice. (Hobson (1901), cited in Freeden, 1978: 178)

Eugenics, like national efficiency in general, was (except perhaps for a short while after its inception in 1901), hardly ever a 'unified' movement. Eugenists divided into two main camps - 'positive' and 'negative' eugenists. Positive eugenists wanted racial progress via 'good breeding', while negative eugenists aimed to prevent unsuitable breeding. At least at first, eugenics attracted many who were keen to see social amelioration of one sort or another, believing that

> eugenics covered any measure that might improve the health and happiness of babies. Others, who knew better, were easily side-tracked, or, in some cases, deliberately posed as eugenists in order to attract attention to some other cause they wished to promote, temperance, sex education, control of venereal disease, the establishment of milk depots, . . . The social reformer, as [Major Leonard] Darwin was aware, sometimes sought the eugenist's support 'in connection with some minor eugenical advantages resulting from his proposals . . . when once the eugenic blessing has been received, all thoughts of hereditary influences are likely to disappear from his mind'. (Searle, 1976: 14)

Thus it was often difficult to separate those who were true eugenists from those who were not. Caleb Saleeby, for example, called himself a eugenist, and took a prominent role in the Eugenics Education Society (Searle, 1976). He wrote one of the earliest textbooks of Sociology to appear in Britain. Here, he proclaimed himself to be interested in sociology and the social sciences 'as the necessary preliminaries to any scientific study of the principles of morality' (Saleeby, c.1905: 19).[7] This proto-Hobhousian or Durkheimian conception of sociology is supplemented by a chapter on the city which gives the strong impression that Saleeby was an environmentalist, in a

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7 Saleeby's textbook, *Sociology*, is undated. Textual evidence indicates that it was published around 1905-6. Saleeby mentions only the first volume of the journal of the Sociological Society, the *Sociological Papers*, which contains the papers read to the Society during the course of its first year's meetings in 1904.

fairly modern sense. He wrote at length of the causes of degeneration in the city as consisting in overcrowding, dirty air, lack of sunlight, and the absence of adequate sources of fresh food.

> [T]he citizen is a stranger to pure air. . . because he burns coal and burns it uneconomically, dirtily, and dangerously. His air is not merely an impure mixture of gases, but is loaded with deleterious solid particles as well. The lungs of the eskimo are pearly white; those of the average Briton a dirty grey; of the Londoner, coal-black - which is indeed to be expected, since they are full of coal. . . . the modern city is an insult to the sun, which is the giver of life and the great anti-septic. Sixty percent is the proportion of sunlight cut off from the citizens of London by the dirt in their atmosphere. (Saleeby, c.1905: 88-89)

Saleeby's 'eugenic' position provides a good illustration of the ways in which this new 'science' of racial improvement, of which the purpose, according to its founder, Francis Galton, was to improve the inborn qualities of the race, could be 'perverted' by those with other motives. Saleeby called himself a eugenist, was active in the Eugenics Education Society, claimed to believe that heredity was more important than 'environment' in evolution (ibid: 105), while simultaneously trumpeting the virtues of Garden Cities and model villages like Port Sunlight and Bournville (ibid: 93).

Overall, the years around the turn of the century were the culmination of a rising tide of concern about the problem of 'degeneration', whether physical, moral or both, and nationalistic jealousy of (especially) Germany, against an intellectual background in which Darwin's theory exemplified the highest achievements of science. The central question of the age was *how* to arrest this national decay. How it was answered depended to a large extent on one's political beliefs, socio-economic and intellectual background. This confused and confusing political and intellectual situation would eventually give rise to the 'new' Liberal welfare reforms between 1906 and 1914, which have been seen by some as the foundations of the Welfare State (Thane, 1982), and by others as a 'social service' state (Hay, 1983).

At the 'official' level of government and administration, awareness of the existence of an 'environmental' crisis connected to the social crisis, was evident in the

rise of the Public Health movement. By 1889, there were 1,500 Medical Officers of Health, a role that involved reporting on health and the enforcement of sanitary legislation in a district (Porter, 1991:165). By 1907, the public health movement, which included such institutions as the Society of Medical Officers of Health, the Royal Institute of Health and the Royal Sanitary Institute, began to align itself with the Town Planning Movement (ibid: 168), a movement which was undoubtedly 'environmentalist' (though not necessarily concerned with 'natural' environments or the relations between people and nature). Similarly, Town Planners like Barry Parker and Raymond Unwin (strongly influenced by the ideas of Patrick Geddes) co-opted the language of public health when they advocated housing reform on the basis that over-crowding exacerbated the spread of disease (ibid: 168). Both groups played to the popularity of eugenics. As Porter suggests

> environmentalist ideologies co-opted the *language* of degenerationism into arguments for comprehensive, holistic social planning. . . an example of the mixture of eugenic rhetoric and environmental reformism, the latter of which was exemplified by Patrick Geddes' work. Whatever the precise terms of the discourse, however, the emphasis was on regeneration through nurture rather than nature. (Porter, 1991: 169)

During these years, however, the public health and town planing movements were only one response to environmental and social crisis. The foundation of other recognisably 'environmentalist' movements was indicative of a more generalised public awareness of the extent of the crisis of 'industrial' society.

The Emergence of Environmentalism in Environmental Crisis

Several recognisably environmentalist movements began in the decades around the turn of the century, among which were the Coal Smoke Abatement Society as well as the Garden Cities Association, the Selbourne Society, the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, the National Trust, the Metropolitan and Garden Cities Association, the Camping Club, and the Society for the Preservation of the Wild Fauna of the Empire (Lowe and Goyder, 1983: 16). If Dunlap and Catton's argument for the *visibility of*

environmental problems, and the *emergence of environmentalist movements* as factors involved in the development of environmental sociology (1994: 7), is correct, the existence of an environmental sociology in Britain during these years should not surprise us. One reason that it has remained hidden lies in the fact that sociology did not 'officially' exist in Britain during these years, but was itself no more than a 'social movement' (Halliday, 1968). There were many social thinkers who either called their own work sociology during these years, or who quickly adopted the title following institutionalisation. One difficulty for contemporary historians of sociology is to decide which of these works was *really* sociology, and which was not.

Background and Character of an Environmental Sociologist

Born in rural Scotland, in October 1854, Patrick Geddes was the youngest child of elderly parents of fairly modest means. His formal education took place at the local school, but it seems to have been his informal education which inspired him and determined his adult interests. His father, who had been a professional soldier, was retired by the time of his youngest son's birth, and spent many hours teaching the boy to garden, and to observe the plant and animal life around him in the Scottish hills. Geddes resisted careers in both banking and the church, and continued to study, informally, chemistry, biology, geology, mineralogy, botany and physiology. In the mid-1870s, at the age of twenty, and under pressure from his family to finally choose a career, Geddes opted for botany and left for the University of Edinburgh, where, finding the classroom education dull, dry and lifeless, he discovered the work of T.H. Huxley, champion of the (then heretical) ideas of Charles Darwin. Abruptly terminating his Edinburgh studies, he determined to work with Huxley at the London School of Mines.

Upon arrival in London, however, Geddes found that his years of informal study counted for nothing, as Huxley demanded that he spend a further year in more formal study before being allowed to join the course. The result was that Geddes spent the following year exploring and observing in urban London, a startling contrast with

his former habits of rural observation and nature study. At the end of the year he passed with ease the exams necessary to enable him to study biology under Huxley.

Geddes' subsequent intellectual development owed much to the influence of Huxley. Through him, Geddes developed an interest in the social theories of Comte and Spencer,[8] who would remain important influences throughout his life. In London, too, he came into contact with the English positivists as well as with Ruskin, with whom he corresponded, and who was to become another life-long influence. It was Huxley who suggested, in the late 1870s, that his over-worked student spend time in France, where Geddes came into contact (via Demolins) with the social theories of Le Play.

From the early 1880s, Geddes made increasing incursions into the new science of sociology, even while he was employed as a teacher and demonstrator of botany at Edinburgh. He never produced a work solely devoted to sociology, however, though one was planned. He remained on the fringes of academic life all his life, even after he became the first Professor of Sociology and Civics at the University of Bombay, for a fixed five year term.

Personality

In so far as Geddes appears in texts devoted to the history of sociology he is usually presented as having been a 'maverick' (Meller, 1990), eccentric (Hawthorn, 1976), amateur (Philip Abrams, 1968), a 'sociographer' whose theory made no impact on sociology (Fletcher, 1971); or with having contributed little beyond the development of the survey method (which is mainly attributed to Booth and Rowntree (Mark Abrams, 1951)). More seriously, he has been condemned for having shown subsequent generations of town-planners what to avoid (Hebbert, 1980). This characterisation is to some extent understandable. Geddes was an exuberant, plain-speaking, forthright man, whose capacity to assimilate the ideas and theories of others from both natural

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8 Huxley and Spencer were old friends, though they fought publicly about theories of evolution (Peel, 1971: 132; 151-3).

and social science was enormous. The scope of his own knowledge was vast, and he had little patience for those who failed to understand and be enthused by his ideas. Although he touched the lives of many of his contemporaries in a profound way through personal contact, lectures and letters, he felt himself, in the end, to have failed. As he wrote to his friend Branford in 1919, a life-time spent thinking was doomed to futility if not accompanied by publication. And then, too, he had simply ignored those who disapproved of his theories, when it would have been better to have defended himself publicly (Geddes, cited in Boardman, 1978: 298-299).

Lewis Mumford, who claimed to have been profoundly influenced by Geddes intellectually, met him, towards the end of Geddes' life, in 1923. The two men had corresponded intermittently from 1917 (Novak, 1995), and Geddes had hoped that Mumford would be his colleague and collaborator, helping him to sort out his sociological ideas and produce his long-planned sociology book. Geddes was by this time an old and broken man, having lost both his wife and eldest son in 1917 (the former to dysentery, the latter to the war) a tragedy from which he never recovered (compare photographs, Boardman, 1978: 279). He had high hopes of his relationship with Mumford, both personally and intellectually. Yet their meeting was not a success, and Mumford, clearly filled with guilt at having failed to live up to the older man's hopes, while profiting intellectually from their association, subsequently attempted to exonerate himself by publishing an account of the failure of their friendship, which amounts to no less than an outright assassination of Geddes' character. There can be little doubt that Geddes was never, even before his personal tragedy, an easy personality. Yet the picture Mumford presents is of a wild and dishevelled maniac, lacking in manners and mumbling perpetually and incoherently into his unkempt beard (Mumford, 1966). Meller's (1990) sketch of his character is probably much more accurate.

> Working outside any conventional framework, either institutional or academic, Geddes . . . . had a brilliant facility for demolishing the ideas of others, from which he gained much pleasure. He was a restless 'entrepreneur' in the newly-developing social sciences, who preferred to

> test his own ideas in personal debate which tended to give him the advantage. He reached out to as many individuals as he could by constant travelling, fleeting exhibitions, and lecturing, and was happy when he met people receptive to his ideas. Believing that achieving his objective: social and environmental improvement and regional self-determination, could not be done by book learning alone, he was too impatient to spend his time developing his ideas in a major treatise.(Meller, 1990: 2)

Geddes' Theoretical Orientation

Geddes was a holistic thinker, although the term itself was not coined until 1926, near the end of his life.[9] All things biological and social, natural and cultural, scientific and artistic, theoretical and practical, were, for Geddes, interlinked in basic and essential ways, leading him to transpose his own basic biological triad of environment, function and organism, on to the Le Playist formula, place, work and folk.[10] By the early 1920s Geddes defined sociology in terms of the holistic study of people, affairs and places - a synthetic discipline composed of anthropology, his own brand of economics and geography - whose object was to catch the flux or moving stream of everyday life, the better to discern its evolutionary direction (1920:3-4). But Geddes, in common with the other classical sociologists, was concerned not only with an understanding of society and social change, but with improving it. His difficulty (or one of them) lay in getting people to understand his vision, which - though it differed only in certain respects from more conventional world-views - was incomprehensible to many of his contemporaries. In 1920, Geddes felt that a return to the pre-war trajectory of social and economic development would be inimical to progress. The post-war era, he believed, offered opportunities (as well as many dangers) for radical social departures and reconstruction, in which the newly developing social sciences had much to offer (1920:4). His major ideas for 'the making of the future' were published as part of a

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9 The term holism was coined by J.C. Smuts, in *Holism and Evolution* (1926). Both Boardman (1978) and Kitchen (1975) record Geddes' approval of this book.

10 The influence of Le Playist sociology should not be overstated. Geddes was equally influenced by Comte's work, from which the Le Playists wished to dissociate themselves.

series of the same name between 1917 and 1919. Their message was that the time had come for a transition from a 'machine and money economy towards one of life and personality and citizenship' (Boardman, 1978: 304).

Geddes and Darwin

Darwin of course, was at least as important a figure in late nineteenth century Britain as he was elsewhere. As a botanist who had worked under Darwin's fiercest defender, T.H. Huxley, it would be surprising if Geddes had not had a more sophisticated understanding of the theory of evolution by natural selection than some of the other sociologists of the late nineteenth century. His dual interest in both social and natural science is significant, for if Darwin and Spencer were often 'routinely conflated in the public mind' (Young, 1985: 184), and even, as Clarke (1984) has argued, in the minds of sociologists, this is less likely to be true of Geddes. Moreover, the debate over Darwin's theory did not stand still, and Geddes, since he continued to be both a botanist and a sociologist, kept abreast of these debates. With his friend and former student J. Arthur Thomson, Geddes produced several articles for the *Chambers Encyclopaedia* between 1888 and 1892 on subjects including Biology, Botany, Environment and Evolution and (again with Thomson) published small volumes on *Evolution* (1911) and *Biology* (1924), as well as in 1931 the enormous two volume work entitled *Life: an Outline of General Biology*. These texts leave little doubt that Geddes followed the debates critically, knew the history, and understood the various theories of evolution well enough to use them creatively for his own, social-theoretical ends. To the extent that his work is 'biologically' confused, therefore, it is likely that this is consistent with confusions within contemporary biology itself.

Geddes' Environmental Sociology

Two early papers give the best indication of the subsequent direction of his thought. The first, 'On the Classification of Statistics and its Results', was presented at the Royal Society of Edinburgh in instalments between March and May 1881, followed in 1884

by 'An Analysis of the Principles of Economics'. The two papers form the basis of his subsequent sociology.

The Classification of Statistics

The 1881 paper was an ambitious attempt, heavily influenced by his reading of Comte, to devise a system of classification for all social statistics. The system was based on a set of axiomatic statements about societies in their relationship with nature. Having defined statistics as 'a quantitative record of the observed facts or relations in any branch of science' (1881:8), Geddes proposed the following definition of 'a society'.

> First . . . a society obviously exists within certain limits of time and space. Secondly it consists of a number of living organisms. Thirdly, these modify surrounding nature, primarily by seizing part of its matter and energy. Fourthly, they apply this matter and energy to the maintenance of their life, i.e. the support of their physical functions . . . . A society may be much more than all this . . . but in any case these four generalisations are obviously true, neither hypothesis nor metaphysical principle being involved. These will therefore henceforth be termed sociological axioms.(1881:12)

These propositions formed the basis of Geddes subsequent explanation of the persistence of social activity through time and space, in terms of the production and consumption of life-sustaining goods.[11] Contained in these axiomatic statements is the basis of his sociological theory.

Geddes' holism was apparent even at this early stage. A complete set of statistics for any given society would include a variety of data about people (organisms), their occupations (function) and their environment. The concept of environment was absolutely central in Geddes' sociology. He used it, in different contexts, to refer to every aspect of human existence - natural, cultural, and built (and even to the 'internal environment' of the body), though he was not always careful to specify which sense of the term he was using at any given moment.

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11 Geddes may have taken his axioms largely from the German 'social energeticist' Wilhelm Ostwald. Compare Sorokin's (1956 [1928]: 20-22) account of Ostwald's work with Geddes' sociological axioms.

The purpose of a complete set of statistics would be to provide a 'snapshot' of a particular moment in the moving flux of history (1881: 8-9). The tabular presentation of his system was complex, and it was by no means immediately clear how all the information, once collected, could be collated and made commensurable (leaving aside the very big problem of interpretation). An unabridged copy of Geddes' diagram (figure 1) has here been included on a separate sheet, to accomodate its size (see inside back cover). Boardman's (1978) adaptation of the original (figure 2), in which he has added a fifth 'axiom' on the basis that this is what Geddes himself intended, appears on the following page.

In relation to his first axiom, Geddes proposed to classify statistics under the heading 'Territory' (physical environment). Here he included information about the quality and quantity of land and water, the *extent* of its use and disuse, the *functions* for which it was used, whether specialised or unspecialised, and its expansion, whether due to human agency (e.g. expansion through land reclamation, discovery, purchase or 'conquest') or natural geological changes, or contraction through either social agency or natural forces (for example, floods, earthquakes, avalanches, etc.).

Under Organisms (people) Geddes put statistical data on population, its growth and decrease through migration as well as birth and death rates, and information about different physical characteristics based on 'racial' difference. To this he added information concerning the mental, physical and social health of populations, as well as information about employment, understood as different sorts of 'operations on matter and energy'. These 'operations' might involve the physical environment as in mining, farming, fishing, manufacture and transport, or act on other organisms (as in service occupations).

Another important aspect of 'function' or occupation, for Geddes, was its centrality for the study of social relations. Although he did not explicitly formulate it as such in 1881, it is possible to elucidate his intention by following his classificatory diagram. Under the heading 'organisms' (people), he included statistics relating to 'mutual relations'. The difficulty of uncovering the nature of something so nebulous as

Figure 2: Geddes' Sociological Axioms and Classification of Statistics

Axiom I	A society exists within certain limits of space and time.	**Group A** (Territory) includes all facts of political geography: the quantity and quality of space occupied by the nation in question
Axiom II	A society consists of living organisms.	**Group B** (Organisms) deals with the quantity, quality and occupations of members of society: what they are and what they do.
Axiom III	Organisms modify surrounding nature, mainly by seizing part of its matter and energy.	**Group C** (Production) co-ordinates the facts relating to sources of energy in the territory: to exploitation, manufacture and movement of products; and to premature loss of energy and matter.
Axiom IV	Organisms use this matter and energy in the maintenance of their life.	**Group D** (Distribution) would include the manner in which territory, products, services, or tokens for any of these are divided among or consumed by the society's members.
Axiom V	organisms are modified by their environment, their occupation, and by each other.	**Group E** (Results) would provide a place for all the observations of hygienist, physician, biologist, and psychologist relative to the effects of environment and mode of life upon the organisms.

Reproduced from Boardman, 1978: 56.

a 'relation', which is impossible to observe empirically, led Durkheim to outline and clarify, formally, his *Rules of Sociological Method* (1895). Geddes', working some ten years before Durkheim coined his now famous exhortation to consider 'social facts as things', proposed to study 'mutual relations' via the social functions of production as employment. If the nature of the division of labour could be categorised, on the one hand, according to its 'function' in terms of operations on matter and energy, it could also be categorised according to the nature and degree of 'mutual' service. He constructed a typology of different occupations, classifying them according to the sort of service they provided for other members of society. People who were engaged, for example, in the primary sector, or manufacture, transportation or exchange of goods, were performing an *indirect service* for other members of society. Those engaged in menial or domestic labour (function: non-cerebral service), the creation of works of art (function: aesthetic cerebral service), or teaching (function: cerebral intellectual) were providing a *direct service* for other members of society.[12] Those engaged in government or administrative occupations were put into a separate category for the function (or service) of '*co-ordination*'. A separate column was included for those who provided no social service to others or whose contribution was dysfunctional. Those who were unemployed or disabled for different reasons (including the very old and the very young, as well as those who 'refused' work) contributed nothing to the maintenance of society in energy terms; and occupations that were either in themselves destructive (war, crime) or devoted to remedies for these, involved an energy loss or wastage and as such should be subtracted from the energy balance sheet of society.

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12 Geddes also included a category of direct service which performed a 'moral' function. Although it is not obvious which occupations fall into this category we might assume that he meant those who provided 'religious' as well as perhaps law-making or law-enforcing services. In all likelihood, in view of his views on women as 'natural' educators, he would probably have included them in this category or that of 'intellectual' service, as a result of their roles as parents (Geddes, 1914: 214-228).

Quite clearly then, for Geddes, people could be said to modify or change each other in social interaction, even at a distance, between strangers, through their occupations, and it is this which justifies Boardman's addition of a fifth axiom: 'people are modified by their environment, their occupation and by each other'.

What also becomes clear, at this point, is the normative element in Geddes' thought. The 'functions' of different occupations are to be described not in terms of individual acquisition, social status, market position or according to whether they involve ownership of capital or labour (the descriptive categories applied by some others), but in terms of the degree and type of social 'service' they provide. In other words, both the division of labour and the social needs it fulfilled, were central for Geddes as for Durkheim, but for Geddes these needs were conceptualised as concrete material and cultural requisites of societal life, rather than as an evolutionary response to resource scarcity which is simultaneously an expression of social solidarity and an *a priori* emotive attachment to the social. For Geddes it was 'production' (which always involved social relations) rather than communication, which was the fundamental social fact.

Statistics covering both goods and processes of production again began from the *sources of energy* and *potential energy* to be found in a particular territory - including basic, uncombined chemical elements, volcanic energy, tides, sunlight, water and wind as well as sources of food (from the soil and sun) and fuel (as coal, oil, gas). Geddes also considered the energy potential of plants as food and fuel, and animals and human beings as food, fuel and machines - though in the text which accompanied his massive table he explicitly ruled out cannibalism as a source of energy on the grounds that it was morally wrong. *Processes of production* involved the conversion of matter and energy into 'ultimate' products. Necessary statistics included a classification of the different sources of energy used to produce different goods and services, including the energy used in transportation to the place of consumption. *Products* were to be divided according to function - whether they were socially *useful* (protective and supporting, locomotive, alimentary or aesthetic) or *destructive* (as in instruments of war) - or

whether they had a *'remedial'* use for putting right the damage done by the destructive elements in production.

Lastly, as with people and territories, Geddes was interested in loss or wastage in production, and the column devoted to statistics on the premature dissipation and disintegration of energy and matter classifies it according to the stage of production (exploitation, manufacture, transport, exchange or 'ultimate product', or (in consideration of the wastage of people), in terms of the remedial effort involved in putting right the results of war, crime or other 'folly'.

Other statistics necessary for a whole picture of society at any given moment in history included those which portrayed the *distribution of resources* whether as 'territory' or different sorts of goods and services (or money as the symbol of title to these). Geddes' statistical table includes columns for information about both shared resources and those which were distributed between the different classes of people - to those engaged in 'indirect services to members of society' through exploitation or manufacture, those engaged in 'direct services to members of society' and those disabled or unemployed for different reasons.

A final row of squares on Geddes' classification of statistics - 'Results', indicated that the purpose of the collection of such disparate statistics on land, water, energy, people, employment, unemployment, war, crime, disaster, production and distribution was knowledge about the quality of both community life in general, and as this varies between classes - as these were defined in terms of the functions of occupations for social service.

In sum, Geddes' early attempt to construct a system for the classification of statistics, is as suggestive as it is impossibly exhaustive. Certainly, it is systematic, in that it begins from the most basic or 'axiomatic' assertions about the nature of human existence: in order to live, people must produce the material means of survival from the surrounding environment. The act of production involves them in activities which modify the natural environment. The act of production is also 'social' - the different occupations perform different services with respect to other members of society. Not

only can some of these 'services' be seen to be 'dysfunctional', in that they involve the loss or wastage of energy (including human energy), but some of them are services that acknowledge the distinctive characteristics of the human species: the occupations which modify other human beings through 'direct' service serving a 'cerebral' function, indicating Geddes' belief that 'art' and other cultural activities that did not contribute directly to the acquisition of material wealth were equally important social activities.

The Principles of Economics

The 1884 paper on economics was essentially a continuation of what Geddes had begun in 1881, and amounted to a swingeing attack on contemporary theories of political economy as well as an attempt to devise a new economic theory. It is a long paper, and was presented to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in three parts. After this, whenever Geddes insisted on the importance of economic analysis in sociology, he had in mind *this particular interpretation of the relations between people and resources and the nature of wealth.*

Using a Spencerian classification of sciences, Geddes began from physics and chemistry, moving through biology and psychology, to 'sociology' - though he claimed to have 'put off' the sociological part of his analysis (1884:8). In his view,[13] economics operated on these three analytically separable levels - the physical, biological and psychological, although these were interrelated in practice.

Physical Principles

The first principle of economics (beyond pure mathematics) was 'physical'. The production, distribution and consumption of 'material wealth' must be explained in physical terms using energy as a unit of measurement. Physical economics began from producers and consumers, not as 'biological' or thinking beings, but

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13 Geddes' view was similar to that of others engaged in attempting to revise economics, including Frederick Soddy, Stanley Jevons and Wilhem Ostwald (Martinez Alier, 1987)

> simply as so many forms of mechanisms constructed out of the matter of the earth's crust and worked by the energy of the sun - as so many species of automata called *Homo*...(1884: 11)

Every living organism in this physical sense, including the human organism is

> constantly wearing out and its energy running down - and this waste which its functions involve must be repaired by obtaining from the environment periodic supplies of new matter and energy. From the destructive forces of the environment it must similarly be protected; . . . . From the present standpoint then, it is not merely analogous to, but identical with a mechanism; "producers" are those automata devoted to the acquisition of matter and energy from the environment; while all are "consumers", and in this aspect in wonderfully similar degree (1884:11-12)

Starting from a given 'territory' at a particular moment in history, it was possible to enumerate the available sources of both matter and energy.

> This matter and energy are as yet mere raw material or potential products, and require development into ultimate products; the requisite processes of production generally having three stages - exploitation, manufacture, and movement, the last including transport and exchange; for exchange from our present point of view is simply part of the process of movement of the product from the place of production to that of consumption. That proportion of potential products (large in complex societies) which has to be converted into *apparatus* used in the stages of development is conveniently termed *mediate products*: and thus we have an exhaustive classification of all products whatever in its most generalised form. Finally, much premature dissipation and disintegration, termed loss, may occur at all stages of development and must be estimated for. (1884:12-13)

Mirroring his earlier classification of statistics, Geddes argued that economics must take into account the producer, consumer, and product, as these were calculable in terms of natural materials and energy, rather than in terms of monetary 'value'. Unused, or undeveloped matter and energy became 'potential product', the apparatus of production (capital), became 'mediate product', and the finished article 'ultimate product'. Ultimate products were themselves divisible into 'transient' and 'permanent' (the term consumption being not really applicable to the latter, which led Geddes to

prefer the term 'use' (1884:21)). In developing potential into ultimate product, it was also necessary to estimate for any loss or wastage of matter or energy.

Geddes believed that if the study of production, consumption and distribution were undertaken for previous periods in history, as well as for the present, it would be possible to compare the relative income of matter and energy from nature over time, which would demonstrate not only that capital consisted of both apparatus *and energy*, but also the reality of "the law of diminishing return" (1884:14).

A particular quantity of matter and energy was employed in any process of production of an 'ultimate' or end- product, and a particular proportion of that was lost, or wasted at different stages, from extraction, through exploitation to distribution and consumption. For every process, theoretically, it should be possible to measure the net income in terms of units of energy, as well as by weight or number. Geddes pointed out that if human beings were conceptualised only in their capacity as machines or automata, as *part of the apparatus of production*, and their needs calculated in terms of matter and energy as fuel, the problem of collation and comparison of data became much simpler. 'Producers and machines are, in short, not only interchangeable but commensurable' (1884:17). When the loss and wastage in matter and energy at every stage of the productive process was subtracted from the gross ultimate product (also expressed in terms of energy and matter), the remainder was the net amount of ultimate product. Geddes commented that

> 'the net amount of ultimate product may seem unwarrantably small in proportion to the gross amount of potential product; . . . [which suggests] the vast losses of energy and matter, often many times exceeding the product, due to the imperfection of our processes.(1884:17)

Traditionally the loss and wastage in matter and energy from Nature did not enter into *the calculated cost of production* - which involved merely potential and mediate products (these latter being the apparatus of production and the human automata which operated them), so that a profit was made so long as the cost, in losses and

waste, of production at any stage did not exceed the total quantity of ultimate product. Geddes argued that profit was actually 'the *interest* paid by Nature upon the matter and energy expended upon her during the processes of production' (1884:18). His refusal of monetary calculation at this stage allowed him to see what Marx missed. For Marx, the owners of capital derived their profit from the surplus value of the labour expended by the worker in production. Yet to the extent that the exchange value of an item is produced by the *energy* expended in human labour, which, according to Geddes, had to be considered in the same terms as the rest of nature, but which is *not generally calculated as part of the cost of production*, the surplus appropriated by the capitalist can be equated with the increased quantity of resources (and especially food) required to keep the worker working beyond what is necessary to reproduce the necessities of his own life. Although he had argued in 1881 for the necessity of statistical data relating to the social distribution of goods, Geddes did not consider the social distribution of profit or products in 1884, suggesting that this was impossible until existing conditions had been investigated in detail. This, in general, was a theme on which he continued to insist throughout his work: that since theory and practice were inextricably related, one ought not to theorise speculatively, but concentrate on ascertaining the 'facts' as a basis for theory. He did argue, though, that if the quantity of ultimate products per unit time (as man-hour, man-day or man-year) *were known*, the average store of 'wealth' of the community could be calculated. *The details of appropriate distribution could then be calculated on the basis of the difference between the average distribution and deviations from it* (ibid.: 18). Production should also be estimated for different historical epochs, whether it was measured by the year, the decade, the generation, or the century, and in even more general terms, to include the total collective production of the entire human race - which he proposed to refer to as its 'Synergy'. *This calculation would highlight the importance of conservation, by showing the vast amounts of matter and energy expended, either as ultimate product, or lost, over time.*

Geddes was as concerned with *quality* of production, as with *quantity*. Dividing up ultimate products in conventional terms into necessaries, comfort and luxuries, Geddes concluded that the consumption of luxuries could be seen to serve a useful function. The function of the consumption of luxuries, or 'super-necessaries' was to stimulate the sense organs - 'gustatory, visual and tactile' of the consumer. Thus Geddes proposed that in 'any at all civilised community' a large part of production served an 'aesthetic subfunction'. Thus, dividing up all ultimate products into their necessary and aesthetic functions, he was forced to the conclusion that 'production, though fundamentally for maintenance, is mainly for art' (1884:21).

Consumption or use, whether of necessaries or super-necessaries, took place at variable rates according to whether the ultimate product was transitory or permanent. As the unit of measurement of time was extended from day to year to generation, etc., it became obvious that the consumption of transient ultimate products, like food and clothing, had increased disproportionately to the use of permanent ultimate products (infrastructure as well as 'art'). This yet again highlighted the importance of conservation -

> for the accumulated wealth - and consequently the historic synergy - may be said to vary almost inversely as the transitory and directly as the permanent elements of production.(1884:21)

Implications of Physical Economics

The practical implications of these 'physical-economic' principles of production and consumption led Geddes to suggest that of the two alternatives of maximising or minimising production per unit time, maximisation of permanent ultimate products was the proper direction to take. The (re-)organisation of production, however, should be concerned with improvements in exploitation and manufacturing power, with the reduction of wastage and loss of materials and energy, including the minimising of friction in transport, and the simplification of trade (1884: 23). As far as consumption was concerned, Geddes pointed out that if an increase in wealth was the concern of the economist, then the increased manufacture of permanent ultimate products was the

ideal to be aimed for, rather than the increase in transient ultimate products. *'Real wealth' consisted of the total environmental conditions of living; in the aesthetic and cultural value of the man-made environment, as well as in its utility as nutrition or shelter; and in clean air, good light and pure water.* In short, Geddes was interested in quality of life. Given the appalling environmental conditions in many urban areas during this period, what is surprising is perhaps not that Geddes should calculate wealth in this way, but the refusal of so many others to do so. Geddes clearly found the apparent indifference of both the wealthy and poor to their environment thoroughly inexplicable. He reiterated the point in an 1888 pamphlet:

> The reduction of wealth from its mere notation in money to its concrete terms of materially enriched environment has never indeed been adequately attempted by economists, while the public remain as much mercantilist as ever; for so long as the businessman continues to define "success in life" in terms of money making, instead of money making in "success in living", or so long as the workman who strikes readily for a rise or against a fall in wages submits patiently to the increasing unwholesomeness of his surroundings, or resents all outlay on their amelioration, it cannot be said that the realities of wealth have as yet been really discerned behind their symbols by either the capitalist or labourer.(1888: 295-296)

Biological Principles

Geddes noted that much contemporary economic literature used the language of biology, but believed it was spurious to apply such analogies as "competition", "laws of population" or the "social organism" to human society. Any application of biology to economics must avoid comparisons between people and nature, and all concepts of 'human nature' and begin from the study of people *in* nature (1884:24). Bio-economically speaking, people become not automata but a species of living organisms

> . . . to be generalised with the rest of organic nature, terminating the greatest line of genealogical ascent, and supremely successful in the struggle for existence and domination, in virtue of peculiarly high evolution of the nervous system.(1884:24)

The use of such phrases as 'greatest line of genealogical ascent' and 'supremely successful in the struggle for existence' are entirely compatible with Durkheim's view

of humanity as nature's 'highest representation', clearly indicating Geddes' belief that although humanity was a part of nature, it had certain special or distinctive qualities, which, as he had indicated in his earlier article on the classification of statistics, were associated with moral and intellectual capacities.

Biological economics was based on statistical data on the quantity of a population, as well as its 'quality' in terms of 'health', 'efficiency' and education as well as its 'structure' (racial characteristics), functions and 'mutual relations'. From a functional angle, people were identical with all other animals because they had to find life-maintaining resources in their environment 'by the performance of muscular contractions co-ordinated by the nervous system'. (1884: 25). This was, Geddes believed, the widest possible definition of productive labour.

A Theory of Biological and Social Evolution

Complex functional differentiation in contemporary societies was the result of evolution. Individual organisms, whether ants, bees or human beings were 'modified' by occupation, heredity, and environment. Although, Geddes suggested, the *social* advantages of the division of labour as co-operation were obvious, there might be disadvantages in *biological* terms. The physical demands of an occupation could modify the characteristics of the individual. Where, as in Caste societies, these modifications became hereditary, the degenerative impact of particular occupations could be passed on.

> ...without the slightest postulation of morals, it is a biological fact that as "function makes the organ", it also shapes the organism, and modifies it either for evolution or for degeneration; . . .determines its quantity of health and limits its length of life. Ploughmen and weavers, joiners or soldiers, then, are incipient castes, as surely as Brahmin and Pariah, queen, worker and drone, are formed ones; and the disadvantages of the division of labour, so slowly forced into prominence. . . through the sufferings of the many and the moral enthusiasm of an unscientific few, demand study and classification among the "Variations of Animals and Plants under Domestication."(1884:27)

Geddes may be forgiven for this apparent confusion concerning the 'mechanism' of hereditary modification of the organism, since this was 1884, only shortly after the appearance of Weismann's *On Heredity*, which suggested that *only* internal variations could be inherited. In fact, it is not at all clear whether it *was* confusion, since it is possible to read this passage as suggesting merely that occupational 'environment' could have an effect on general health and longevity, and that this might indirectly affect offspring - which was what Geddes would subsequently argue (Thomson & Geddes, 1911: 118 and 201). This is an important point. Unlike some among his sociological contemporaries (including Durkheim as well as Hobhouse, who would later become his rival at the Sociological Society), the biologist Geddes refused to refute the importance of organic heredity in evolution. But his was not a single factor theory. Even in 1884 Geddes distinguished between *'functional environment'*, or occupation, and *'ancestral environment'*, meaning heredity, as well as between *'social'* or cultural environment and *'natural'* environment. In the natural environment, he thought, the most important factors were food, air quality and light (1884: 27). An organism might degenerate either as a result of the deprivation of food, light, clean water and air, or from excessive consumption (of food), in combination with too little physical exertion. Geddes moralised that degeneration through over-consumption and too little exercise was the most debilitating, bringing about 'that far more insidious and thorough degeneration seen in the life history of myriads of parasites' (1884: 28).

A Theory of Mental Evolution

For 'progress' or 'evolution' rather than 'degeneration' (or mere maintenance) to occur, not only were adequate supplies of food, clean air, and water necessary, but also 'more and more complex conditions of the environment'. Though Geddes did not explicitly define which of his various senses of environment he had in mind here, he was speaking of 'social' or cultural, rather than natural environment. Again, Geddes here exhibited his normative bias. Real wealth consisted in the totality of environmental conditions. He insisted on the 'evolutionary' importance of a complex environment as an organic 'need' (1884:28-9). The importance of the 'aesthetic' element in production,

on which Geddes had placed much importance in his discussion of physical principles, was that the human senses need stimulus in order to 'evolve'.

It is instructive to compare this assertion with Durkheim's (1893) discussion of the needs *created by* the division of labour. In *The Division of Labour*, new needs were created by the division of labour because people had to work harder when resources were scarce, since they were in conflict with others doing the same thing. In the process, more energy was expended (there is a 'great depletion of forces') so that more energy was then required to replace it ('reparation must be proportionate to expenditure'). However, it was the nervous system that was most overworked during this process, and it was as a result of this 'exercise' that the capacity of the brain increased (1893[1933]: 272)

> All these changes are . . . . mechanically produced by necessary causes. If our intelligence and sensibility develop and become keener, it is because we exercise them more, it is because we are forced to by the greater violence of the struggle we have to live through. That is how, without having desired it, humanity is found apt to receive a more intense and more varied culture. (Durkheim, 1893 [1933]: 273)

These accounts of 'mental' evolution are very similar. But there is one crucially important difference. Where Durkheim makes much of the 'conflict' over resources as the factor which 'mechanically' engenders mental evolution, Geddes emphasises the creative production of a more and more complex environment to stimulate the human intellect. Where production at a physical level involved the transformation of matter and energy, he now insists that it can be defined, in biological terms as 'the adaptation of the world to the wants of the species' or 'the substitution of human for natural selection' (1884:29).

Durkheim's insistence on the 'mechanical' nature of social change, brought about as a result of conflict over increasingly scarce resources as population grows and becomes more densely settled, created difficulties for his anti-utilitarian arguments concerning the essentially social and co-operative nature of human beings. But Durkheim, as a *social* scientist, with an academic background in philosophy, had to

rely on secondary sources for his biological knowledge. Geddes, on the other hand, with his natural scientific background, more thorough knowledge of biological theories of evolution, and (perhaps especially) his first hand observations of the natural world, was more confident. He did not feel obliged, in the first place, to claim Darwin directly in support of his argument, though the reference to 'natural selection' is revealing. Secondly, his superior knowledge of the scientific literature on evolution allows him simply to *assume that human beings are essentially social* by referring to the 'social' insects. Of course, since he was not engaging with Spencerian theory in the same manner as Durkheim, there was little need to argue his case. Yet to establish co-operation rather than competition as a basic feature of social life, he uses exactly the same tactic as Durkheim - that functional specialisation leads to structural specialisation or 'polymorphism' (within a single species) and hence to the decline of competition between individuals. Lastly, Geddes inverted the theory of natural selection - in which accidental internal structural changes in the organism survive only if they prove useful in a given environment - to argue that production involves changing or adapting the *external* environment, and that this has an effect on the inheritance of particular characteristics, though not automatically leading to 'progress'. In this way, Geddes has set up a powerful argument for sociology as the holistic study of the total social and natural environment. The least convincing part of the argument made by Geddes is the suggestion that there is some kind of 'innate' need for increasing stimulation of the nervous system which leads to the 'evolution' of mental capacity. This, though, was his way of explaining *why* or *how* it had occurred. Its advantage, compared with Durkheim's, is that because it does not postulate competition, or the struggle for resources between individuals of the same species in order to account for either the division of labour *or* social evolution, it does not leave Geddes with the problem of afterwards having to do away with competition as an innate characteristic of humanity by postulating a moral character for the division of labour.

The purpose of production was the modification of environment in order to fulfil human needs. In turn, people were modified by the environments they created;

and by both the occupations they engaged in to obtain life-sustaining resources from the environment and those through which they provided 'direct' services for one another. Each direct or indirect productive action had a corresponding impact on the 'development' or 'degeneration' of the species. Economists were therefore mistaken in treating production as the 'the production of wealth'. What was really being produced were particular environmental conditions, which were suitable for particular sorts of social life. Contemporary social conditions, which Geddes referred to as 'industrial anarchy', were the result of the misconceived notion that the purpose of production was '"wealth" in its very variable proportions of maintenance, power over others, [and] personal immunity from function' (1884:29). [14]

Population

Surprisingly, in this early discussion of 'biological' economics Geddes said very little about the reproduction of population, and what he did say was far from clear. He referred back to his remarks about the physical principles, where he had argued that 'organisms' are in that context 'automata', to be considered as part of the apparatus of production (or capital, or mediate products). He now suggested that so long as production processes and the "standard of comfort" remained constant (where standard of comfort was equal to the consumption of ultimate products per unit time), any increase in production would necessarily involve an increase in 'automata' (population) (1884: 22). Extrapolating from his biological principles, he suggested further that it was the supply of *transient* products such as food and clothing which resulted in a higher or lower 'standard of comfort', and that this would actually *determine* the extent to which the population of a given class of producers increased (1884: 30). The difficulty with this argument, of course, was that the human organisms he was considering were, in this context, *not* 'automata' but sentient - thinking, feeling

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14 It is worth noting that Geddes' assertion that one of the functions of the accumulation of wealth is 'personal immunity from function' actually predates Veblen's similar argument by more than ten years (Veblen, 1899).

beings; and the contemporary evidence indicated that exactly the opposite was true. The very poorest sectors of society continued to reproduce even in the absence of a high standard of comfort. His earlier argument, however, had favoured the maximisation of production of permanent rather than transient products, in the interest of conservation or 'synergy', and an increase of this sort of production did not require a corresponding increase in population. This made it appear as though he was suggesting that it was possible to determine an approximately fixed 'reproductive ratio' per unit time, for any given class of producers (1884:30).

Martinez-Alier, while praising Geddes for his use of 'energetics' in his critique of economics, remarks that at times his biology, in these early articles, involved some 'sloppy reasoning' (1987: 96). This was, however, Geddes' earliest attempt at a problem he never managed to solve. This was the problem of the consumption of finite resources by an ever growing population.

Population and the Consumption of Resources

In 1890, he presented 'A Theory of the Consumption of Wealth' at a meeting of the British Association for the Advancement of Science (Geddes, 1890). As with much of his work, this theory failed to distinguish between *is* and *ought to be*. It was really a theory of *ideal* consumption, in line with his commitment to the conservation of resources and the need for a complex social environment. A theory of consumption was necessary because *demand* for commodities was a fundamental determinant of both productive occupations and environment, as well as quality of life. Studies were needed of both social *ideals* of, and *actual* consumption, for any given time and place, which would reveal both positive and negative effects. Too much, too little, or the wrong sort of consumption, was both individually and socially destructive. A balance had to be obtained between consumption of life-maintaining necessaries such as food and clothing, and aesthetic and intellectually stimulating goods (transient and permanent ultimate products), as well as between goods for individual maintenance, and those for social maintenance, at the level of family, immediate community, city, nation and species. For 'evolution' to occur, the appropriate balance must be found

between individual and social consumption of physical necessities and intellectually stimulating 'culture'. Geddes suggested that studies of consumption (bearing in mind biological, psychological, ethical aspects of the problem) in different societies, historical and contemporary, would show how to achieve the right balance of consumption to improve the quality of life.

Social Amelioration and Environment

In 1884, Geddes argued that since several factors influenced the quality of the organisms that composed any given community, including the influence of organism on organism by such factors as heredity, education or competition, the influence of function (occupation) on organism, and the influence of environment on organism, social amelioration could not be achieved piecemeal, but must be based in a detailed and synthetic study of the various different aspects of environment. He was adamant that any environmental or occupational factors found to adversely effect the quality of an individual (and by extension an entire community) must be dealt with quite categorically:

> Thus. . . when any given environment or function, however apparently "productive," is really fraught with disastrous influence to the organism, its modification must be attempted, or, failing that, its abandonment faced.(1884: 31)

Geddes had already insisted upon the importance of good food, in sufficient but not excessive quantities, and on the importance of light and clean air. Any environment (natural, built or cultural) that was lacking in these, or any productive occupation that resulted in the deterioration of these essentials had to be changed or abandoned altogether. Although this sort of analysis would be extremely complex, he thought, once it was done it would be possible to

> ...attempt the treatment of such practical questions as the state of the poor, or the advancement of social progress in general - since practical action, at present dispersed into special efforts, each dealing with some aspect of organism, function, or environment alone, (or of some mixture of these) must on pain of failure attempt the synthetic treatment of all.(1884: 31)

Geddes' theory of evolution was multi-causal, and therefore complex. He was quite clearly aware of the difficulties of undertaking the enormous project he proposed, as well as the problem of drawing conclusions from it as a basis for social action. Yet - to him - its necessity was obvious in the face of the unintended and accidental consequences of the lack of co-ordination, planning and foresight inherent in contemporary attempts at social amelioration.

Psychological Principles

Though his concern with social evolution was in part derived from his reading of Spencer, Geddes could not bring himself to define 'utility', as Spencer did, in terms of the principles of pleasure-seeking or pain-avoidance. Pain, he pointed out, could be advantageous to the individual in the process of becoming modified (learning a new skill), while many pleasures were straightforwardly disadvantageous, dangerous or degenerative (for example, an overabundance of food or alcohol). He also wanted to distance himself from conventional economic definitions of 'value', and the notions of 'want' and 'desire'. (1884:33-4) Instead, he suggested that psychology deals with 'the subjective side of the functional aspects of the nervous system'. All productive action, defined as 'muscular contractions', is the result of cerebral stimuli - 'and these, subjectively considered, are wants and desires' (ibid.: 34). These, however, were not mainly individual egoistic 'wants' but were essentially social and as such involved both sympathy and altruism.

All existing societies had developed some degree of complexity of division of labour or specialisation of function. Geddes insisted that this involved both co-operation and an awareness of the social advantages of co-operation. And in co-operation, just as in reproduction, there is sympathy, or altruism:

> Higher and higher differentiation of social structure and function involves corresponding subjective adaptation; as the economic duties of an individual develop in complexity and remoteness to the immediate result, so must their subjective aspect . . . deepen and widen; and thus the material evolution demands a moral evolution running parallel to it. That the material evolution has for the time outrun the moral adaptation is, . . . the essential explanation of much existing economic anarchy. . . .

> progress towards the physical and biological ideal of productive synergy involves parallel progress to an ideal of maximum altruism.(1884: 36)

Again there are shades of Durkheim's *Division of Labour* here, in the insistence that under normal conditions 'moral' evolution accompanies material. Durkheim's 'abnormal forms' of the division of labour included the anomic, the forced and one other (unnamed) (1933 [1893]: 353-395). The existence of any one of these signified a 'pathological' social condition. Geddes' insistence that 'material' had outrun 'moral' evolution anticipated Durkheim's discussion of the 'anomic' division of labour, in which the extreme rapidity of economic specialisation outpaced regulative or 'moral' change. Durkheim suggested that this left individuals bereft of any notion of how their own specialised function contributed to the maintenance of the whole, and was thus disintegrative. As examples Durkheim discussed (among other things) the disjunction between production and consumption as markets become larger and more impersonal, and the disunity of the relatively youthful social sciences. Durkheim's solutions to a 'pathological' condition of the division of labour involved equality of opportunity in a market place undistorted by such external inequalities as inherited wealth.

> It is necessary and sufficient for [the division of labour] to be itself, for nothing to come from outside to deform its nature. For normally the operation of each special function demands that the individual should not be too closely shut up in it, but should keep in constant contact with neighbouring functions . . . . The division of labour supposes that the worker, far from remaining bent over his task, does not lose sight of those co-operating with him, but acts upon them and is acted upon by them. (Durkheim, 1933 [1893]: 372)

Geddes' ideal of moral evolution towards 'maximum altruism' - related to his idea that 'social service' was inherent in every economic function, seems to go a step beyond Durkheim's insistence on equalising 'the external conditions of the struggle' for existence. The health of a society, Geddes suggested, could not be measured by levels of individual acquisition (the 'struggles of individuals for existence'), but only in relation to the whole 'as a responsible and active organ charged with certain special functions to a larger brotherhood' in which practical social improvement involved

organisms, function and environment all at once (Geddes, 1888: 300). Evolutionary theory showed, he suggested, that species-maintaining functions would always triumph over those which maintained only individuals

> . . . it is not hunger and struggle for existence, but love and association in existence, that mainly move and mould the living world, and this gives us a new basis (scientific) for economics. (Geddes, 1888: 293)

The practical solution to the problem of moral evolution, for Geddes, was the modification of the social or cultural environment.

> The problem of practical economics now demands that we produce not that mere maximum of food and eaters, which is the first aspect of the physical ideal; not even that perfection of quality and quantity of physical life which is the first aspect of the biological; but the maximum evolution of mental and moral nature which underlies the two former. The problem, in fact, inverts itself, becoming not merely how to fill bellies, but how to place brains in the condition most favourable to their development and activity, and so the problem of practical psychological economics passes into that of education. The supremacy of the aesthetic factor in production,. . . is thus explained:- The modification of the environment which is the object of production, while primarily addressing the nutritive system and attending to protective needs, must culminate in the complex organisation of the environment which, deliberately addressing itself to the stimulus and evolution of the sensory activities is of such importance for the process of cerebral evolution . . . (1884: 37-38)

Education

Education, therefore, was of central importance for social progress. Too much store was set by cramming children's minds with the received wisdoms handed down through time. Not all of this knowledge was necessarily good, Geddes believed, just because it was old. In fact, it was often no more than suitably diluted 'upper class culture', and as such had been 'moderately successful in orienting the minds of "the Populace" to the existing social order' (Geddes and Branford, 1919: xviii). Children should be encouraged to think for themselves, to learn through observation and experience, and through activities and practical projects as well as simply learning 'facts'. Geddes abhorred the contemporary attempts to separate and define the subject matter of the

academic disciplines. These rigid boundaries were stultifying to the mind, he believed, and led to the construction of 'Thought Cages' (1915: 68); whereas what was required for social progress was the discovery of new relations between different aspects of things, or between things that had previously been assumed to have no relationship, leading to a new synthesis. Universities, as the 'trustees of the social inheritance' should become more open to the mass of the people, and practical local knowledge should be recognised as of equal in value to abstract academic or technical knowledge (Geddes and Branford, 1919: xxv; Geddes and Thomson, 1931: 1387).

Economics and Ethics

Geddes suggested that his (1884) economic analysis was not complete, but needed the addition of a 'sociological' perspective, or the study of 'mutual relations' specified in the 1881 paper on statistics. He acknowledged that the scope of his system of economics, like that of his system for classifying social statistics, was likely to be thought too broad in scope (1881: 25; 1884: 39). As in the earlier paper, too, he confessed that it looked as though his own 'ethical' or ideological position had crept in right at the beginning of the argument, in insisting on maximum production (of permanent products) and maximum (cerebral or mental) evolution, his desire to cut out wastage, whether in human, material, or energy terms, and in his rejection of the iron law of competition in favour of sympathy and altruism (1884: 39). He insisted however, that this was only what his *scientific* studies had shown to be true (i.e. he insisted on his own objectivity). Moreover, ethics was not an isolated science but involved a generalisation of the findings of the other sciences (1884: 40). Since it was impossible to have a perfect and exhaustive knowledge of everything, Geddes pointed out that there would always be cases in which what was shown to be the appropriate course of action by natural scientific knowledge would clash with existing moral and ethical ideas. Scientific knowledge, for example, showed the desirability of utilising all the sources of energy in nature, but as these included humanity itself - *unless there were clearly defined societal aims and objectives*, we might find ourselves logically drawn

into such ethically dubious activities as cannibalism or slavery (1881: 27). Only 'science' could show what social objectives ('postulates for action') ought to be established, and even then, if they were to have validity, they must be based on 'our whole knowledge of society' (1881: 28) rather than mere aspects of what is in any case only partial knowledge.

Given that only imperfect knowledge existed (or was likely to exist for the foreseeable future), but that various moral and ethical systems nevertheless operate, economic analysis ought necessarily to be accompanied by the detailed study of ethical systems. Most actions have both an economic and a moral or ethical aspect. Only where what was ethically right or good coincided with logically derived scientific postulates ought that course of action to be adopted. Geddes believed that ultimately, natural scientific knowledge and a scientific ethics would be found to be in harmony ('unity and continuity') with one another (1881:30).

The Theory of Civics:

Geddes' conception of sociology as 'Civics' - the application of social survey to social service (Geddes: 1905), was firmly grounded in this earlier work. It was here that he developed the idea of the 'region', which, although (perhaps deliberately) spatially vague, was consistentt with his insistence on treating environment function and organism together. Natural and cultural environments differed from place to place, so that it was futile to propose a single national or global solution to social and environmental problems. Each solution must be tailored to the needs of a particular place - its topography, geology, climate, and the culture of its people. Geddes' environmentalism sometimes appeared to be wholly deterministic, particularly when he presented it in schematic form via his 'Valley section' which showed how the nature of work was 'determined' by naturally occurring feature of a particular environment.

In his theory of 'civics', Geddes' main development of his environment, function, organism (EFO) triad was the addition of the idea that individual and social consciousness - as ideas and ideals, values, beliefs and desires - was a product of the

total environment (natural, built and cultural). Thoughts and dreams, as products of different everyday 'experiences' at the level of place, work and folk (or EFO) translated into the creative human 'action' that continually re-modelled and modified the surrounding physical and cultural environment. History was a process of continuous human activity in environment, leading to the discovery or development of knowledge, (feelings, sense and experience), to thoughts (emotion, ideation, imagery), and via human institutions (specifically, the 'cloister' or university) to further actions. He made several attempts at different times (1905; 1922; Geddes and Thomson, 1931) to express this relation both graphically and in written form. His graphic presentations of his theoretical work were not popular with his contemporaries, since they were not, as he seemed to assume, self-explanatory. One problem was that his readers, or audiences, had to be able to understand what he was attempting to say through them, in order for them to make sense. Another was that they embodied not just the theory, but also a normative correction of reality in the direction of greater co-ordination or synthesis. Geddes failed to make an adequate distinction between fact and value, and his diagrams show institutions devoted to the development and synthesis of thought acting as intermediaries between the knowledge and values that arose out of action in environments, and the political institutions that (in theory), enacted the policies that directed the modification of environment towards the amelioration of life (see figure 3, inside back cover). The reality, as Geddes indicated with his reference to 'industrial anarchy' was very different from the ideal embodied in the theory.

Geddes and Durkheim

Many social theorists of Geddes' generation found Darwinian evolutionary theory particularly difficult to come to terms with, since it seemed to make all attempts at social planning or amelioration redundant. The idea of evolution through natural selection implied that 'civilisation' (as Durkheim put it) had no 'moral value', but was the accidental by-product of the struggle for survival, over which humanity had no control. The causes of evolution, according to biological evolutionary theory, were

'mechanical', and not susceptible to human purposive behaviour. Geddes' response to this difficulty was to argue that social evolution was *only partly determined mechanically*. Human activity could be purposeful and creative, but the 'consciousness' which was the source of creative interaction with environment arose from the conditions - natural and social - of life. Social improvement involved a change in human consciousness, which in turn was dependent on a modification of the environment. Geddes saw his own work as offering a synthetic account of the entire complex of social causation - the action and interaction of human societies with environment, as a necessary prerequisite for social planning.

In beginning from natural scientific theory, Geddes was no different from Durkheim or others of the same generation. Via his sociological axioms, he showed that people are indisputably subject to at least some of the same conditions as the rest of nature. Like Durkheim, he wanted to argue that human beings have special or distinctive characteristics, but his theory allowed him to do this without later rejecting his earlier assertions. Instead of beginning from the capacity to communicate as the primary distinctive human trait, he began from the identical nature of human productive activity with that of all other organisms - the fact that societies, to maintain themselves, must utilise the matter and energy found in nature. Production was primary for Geddes - but production conceived of in a particular way. He could just as easily have followed the utilitarians and many of the biological theorists of evolution, including Darwin himself, and taken the individual rather than the societal totality as the unit of analysis. In his insistence on taking the whole rather than its parts as his starting point he was identical with Durkheim - both refused to theorise from the individual as the basic unit of analysis, because both believed that sociability, community, or group living was somehow intrinsic to human life. Like Durkheim, too, Geddes wanted to argue for the importance of mental or 'psychic' evolution - the development of specifically human mental powers. His argument was very similar - it is the degree of *intensity* of social life which stimulates the nervous system, and thus produces the superior mental capacities of human beings. *Unlike Durkheim*, however,

Geddes did not draw back, at this or any later point, from the ethical implications of his 'scientific' approach. This is the purpose of what would otherwise appear to be a rather meaningless and high-flown discussion of the relation between science and ethics at the end of his 1884 paper. Science might show that something is logically correct - but it ought not to be done unless it could also be shown to be ethically good.

Moreover, where Durkheim restricted the scope of sociology to the study of 'moral life', or social relations as they were revealed in human institutions, for Geddes its scope was encyclopaedic, embracing natural as well as cultural environmental influences on human social life. As a biologist, Geddes was not prepared to negate the importance of heredity, although he cleverly inverted the theory of natural selection making the human production of environments a central feature of both social and individual evolution. Durkheim, by contrast, argued that heredity became less and less important as society 'evolved', because the characteristics inherited were more and more 'general' or vague in their impact. Perhaps the most significant difference, however, was Geddes' environmentalism: his insistence on the very basic and life-sustaining importance of the inter-relationships between people and the natural world:

> . . . to remain healthy and become civilised. . . [man] must take especial heed of his environment; not only at his peril keeping the natural factors of air, water and light at their purest, but caring only for the "production of wealth" at all, in so far as it shapes the artificial factors, the materials surroundings of domestic and civil life, into forms more completely serviceable for the Ascent of Man. (Geddes, 1884a: 35)

It is important to remember, when criticising Geddes for his vagueness on the subject of 'sociology' that there was really no such thing *as* sociology in 1884. Certainly, Geddes was acquainted with the work of other nineteenth century theorists, in particular Comte, Spencer and Le Play. As a natural scientist, he believed that sociology needed concrete data on which to base its theories. Social amelioration, which was the purpose of sociology, had to be based on concrete knowledge rather than on speculation. The problem was to find a way to acquire and collate the different sorts of data required. Geddes created a *definition* of society and outlined the *scope* of

a synthetic sociology, as he saw it, in 1881, and created a *theory* by which to interpret it in 1884. *Methods* already existed for the collection of physical and biological data. For the collection of data on social or 'mutual relations', he later argued for sociology as a synthesis of anthropology, geography and economics (Geddes, 1920).

Founder of Environmental Sociology?

Geddes' early ecological analysis of economics was fundamental to all his subsequent thinking. 'Environment' consisted of all the conditions which might affect the human organism in some way: heredity and natural environmental factors such as air, water and food, as well as 'cultural' or social conditions and practices.

In spite of his many failures,[15] perhaps most especially his ultimate failure to produce his projected volume on sociology (Boardman, 1978; Meller, 1990), which might at the very least have made his ideas more easily accessible than they have become, if not also given them more systematic form, Patrick Geddes deserves to be re-instated as an early founder of environmental sociology (Martinez- Alier, 1987:98; Meller, 1990: 312-14). As Robson (1981: 198) suggests, Geddes anticipated what has recently become recognised as essential in any approach to 'environmental management' - the need for a multi-disciplinary approach.

> Now that many of his early ideas have been independently rediscovered and incorporated in the more united social sciences and in social welfare, we are perhaps in a stronger position to appreciate the unrealized potential of the 'wandering scholar' whose self-imposed brief was not merely to plan the city but to plan the world. (Robson, 1981: 204)

Geddes and Classical Human Ecology

Fletcher (1971: 834) has suggested that Geddes contributed to the development of the classical human ecology of the Chicago school, through his contact with Charles Zueblin, who took Geddes' work home to Chicago, and published a glowing report on

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15 Geddes' failures have been well documented elsewhere, and need no special elucidation here (see for example, Abrams, 1968; Meller, 1990; Mumford in Novak, 1995).

the activities of Geddes' Edinburgh Summer Schools in the *American Journal of Sociology* (Zueblin, 1899). In fact, Geddes probably took his own ideas to Chicago, since he gave a course of lectures there in 1898 (Meller, 1990: 303). The link between Geddesian sociology and the Chicago school is therefore genuine. Yet, as recent work has shown, the classical human ecologists tended to use biological and ecological concepts and terminology as metaphors (Gaziano, 1996: 875). Moreover, as Miley (1980) has argued, there were clear continuities between classical human ecology and social Darwinism.

> Park and Burgess agreed with Spencer that competition contributes to the social good . . . . But they argue that with the growth of cities and large scale economic organisations the resulting mutual interdependence mitigates against the "old freedoms and liberties". . . that laissez-faire guaranteed. (Miley, 1980: 166)

It should by now be clear that Geddes was not a social Darwinist (though his position is close to that which Clarke (1984, and above, Chapter One) calls 'reform Darwinism). Nor did he use ecological concepts as metaphors or 'tropes'. He was not only an 'environmental' sociologist, but an '*environmentalist*' (in a fairly modern sense).

Members of the Chicago school, however, did cite Geddes or his colleagues occasionally, though Geddes himself, while welcoming, *The City* (Park, Burgess and McKenzie, 1925), felt it had barely begun to touch the problem of urban communities (Geddes, 1925; Meller, 1990: 303). Even as late as 1950, Hawley's *Human Ecology* contains a few references to Geddes, his colleagues J.A. Thomson and Victor Branford, as well as to the anthropologist A.C. Haddon, and Lewis Mumford, both of whom were influenced by Geddes. But in an author index which runs to several hundred names this is hardly significant. The natural ecologist Frederick Clements, from Chicago, as well as T.H. Huxley and Charles Darwin himself, are all referred to by Hawley much more than Geddes or his colleagues (Hawley, 1950: 433-437). It is much more likely that the theoretical orientation of the Chicago human ecologists derived more from interests already existing there than they did from the 'wandering scholar', and that they simply cited Geddes selectively to support their own particular

perspective. Zueblin, for example, was on the staff of the University of Chicago between 1894 and 1907, and was interested primarily in urban reform. Similarly, the natural science orientation of Albion Small, first Professor of Social Science there, and W.I. Thomas's early interest in natural history were other factors in the general orientation of the school (Bulmer, 1984: 34-37). Certainly no direct link exists between Geddes and Robert Park, the 'founder' of classical human ecology, who did not join the Chicago department until 1913 or 1914 (part-time), well after both Geddes' lecture and Zueblin's departure.[16]

Geddes and New Human Ecology

But if Geddes' link with classical human ecology is tenuous, he is more easily connected with the recently emerged 'new' human ecology, which sets itself against the 'Dominant Western Worldview', and does not limit sociology to the study of 'social structure', but insists on the importance of an understanding of the inter-relationships between people and nature.

During his years in India, Geddes was a major influence on Radhakamal Mukerjee, who was appointed as Professor of Sociology and Economics at Lucknow University in 1921 (Meller, 1990: 220, 225). Geddes wrote an introduction for one of Mukerjee's early books, *Foundations of Indian Economics* (1916), and Mukerjee, clearly influenced by Geddes, produced a volume on *Regional Sociology* (1926). Two articles by Mukerjee in the *American Journal of Sociology* have been hailed by Catton and Dunlap as early examples of environmental sociology. In both articles Geddes' influence is manifest - in the use of particular words and phrases: region, 'the standard of consumption', the 'law of diminishing returns', 'valley section', 'co-ordination of biological and social surveys'.[17] The earlier article (Mukerjee, 1930) was entitled 'The

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16 According to Gaziano (1996: 880), Park accepted a part-time position at Chicago in 1914. Bulmer (1984: 37) suggests the year was 1913.

17 Mumford complained to Geddes that Mukerjee, in spite of having absorbed so much of the master's thought, failed to acknowledge his sources (Novak, 1995: 245, 306).

Regional Balance of Man'. In it Mukerjee suggested that ecology involves the 'idea of the region as an intricate network of interrelations'.

> Man is part and parcel of the process by which the balance of the region is maintained or shifted, and the process is ever continued in see-saw fashion, now in favour of man, now definitely against him. In this process the entire life of inorganic nature is involved, though it may be initiated by some slight human action that sets in motion a series of processes which may conserve or upset the order of nature . . . . often such disturbance is casually and carelessly brought about, or increases cumulatively through man's interference continued for generations until it saps the root of the region's life and engulfs man in the common doom of the region. (Mukerjee, 1930: 456)

Mukerjee's (1932) article 'The Ecological Outlook in Sociology' opens with the language of the struggle for existence, and the processes of 'competition, invasion and succession', but his thesis was the more Geddesian insistence that 'co-operation' in and with both nature and each other was a necessary feature of social advance. Geddes' 'holism' appeared, beautifully expressed, in the assertion that

> The cultural order is woven within the skeleton of the ecological order, and it is the intermeshing of the two orders, organic and spiritual, which sets before us the complex web of the whole life-community in its completeness. As evolution progresses, the organisation of life and mind in the region shows greater correlation and solidarity, on the one hand and extension and continuity on the other. (Mukerjee, 1932: 350)

Mukerjee identified Ogburn's (1922) concept of 'cultural lag' with Geddes concept of 'survivals', when he spoke of the 'fixity' of location, social and economic status, 'plane of living' and 'social norm' (ibid: 350). Social pathology - the maladaptation of humankind to its environment, was evident in a generalised increase in mortality, in increasing disease, as well as in differential mortality rates for those working at different occupations, and in the decay of social institutions. A 'scientific and broad-minded' co-operation with 'ecologic forces', should be the keynote for the future. Instead of continuing to commit 'crime against sun and water, plants and animals', disfiguring the ground, and too often letting loose 'destructive forces which have impoverished and ultimately engulfed . . . civilisation' in the attainment of quick

economic results, it was necessary to advance more slowly, based on research and awareness of the interlacing, and linkages between all forms of life.

Mukerjee's subject was not 'human' but 'social ecology':

> The conservation of soil, water and food, the economy of man's food and energy circulation, the protection of the earth's mantle of trees and grasses, the selection and crossing of crops, trees and animals, the biological control or eradication of diseases, pests and parasites, the utilization of all kinds of organic wastage, permanent agriculture, the conservation of water supply and the training and management of rivers and water-courses, a nicely adjusted occupational balance which may best utilize the resources and possibilities of different sections of the region and the skill and the aptitudes of the people - all this is social ecology.(Mukerjee, 1932: 352)

> Man's understanding of the ecological web which is as yet scanty and partial must expand in order that he may be safe for the region and the region safe for him. . . . But mere scientific understanding of the web of life does not help matters. Man should cultivate a new humility and a new foresight in the interest of the unborn societies of the future, which will be religious in its significance, before he can make himself the central link in the vital chain of food and energy circulation on the earth of which his pattern of civilisation is but a phase, and so far a passing one. (ibid: 353)

Admittedly, this is not much more than a normative statement of aims - concerned with what should be, rather than with how it is to be achieved. The theory was that 'Nature, sun and earth, plants and animals, mingle silently with mind, society and culture, and become part of their structure'. Structure and function (as the 'specific normal pattern of life and its maintenance') were both of fundamental importance, where the presence or absence of a single component or structural factor could affect the specific normal pattern of life, and even its ability to function at all (ibid: 354). As a counter-theory to the human ecologists insistence on studying only the human social structures, for fear of confusing or baffling the student, it was a much needed reminder of the inter-dependence of human life with its physical and organic surroundings. It was also a voice in the wilderness.

The Strange Disappearance of Patrick Geddes

In view of his role (however small, however selective) in the establishment of classical human ecology at Chicago, and his influence on Mukerjee, who is now claimed as a neglected example of early environmental sociology, Geddes' disappearance clearly needs some explanation. Why for example, does Bulmer's (1984) history of the Chicago School not mention Geddes at all, in spite of the fact that he lectured at Chicago in 1898, and in spite of his influence on Zueblin? Why have contemporary environmental sociologists in Britain begun to discuss the implications and relevance of Marx's ideas (Benton 1989, 1993; Dickens, 1992; Mellor, 1992; Martell, 1994), Durkheim's, Weber's (Redclift and Woodgate, 1994; Goldblatt 1996) and even those of T.H. Marshall (Newby, 1996), but not Geddes? The answer is that Geddes and his ideas were excluded, more or less deliberately, during the early years of the establishment of sociology in Britain, from academic institutionalised sociology. Moreover, the non-academic organisations and associations which did retain Geddesian ideas, kept only some of them - in particular his emphasis on the importance of the Regional Survey - often without understanding the importance of the wider context of his thought. As a result Geddes, where he is not forgotten entirely, has acquired a reputation with which most contemporary sociologists would not wish to be associated. The early years of Sociology in Britain, and Geddes' exclusion, are examined in the following chapter.

Chapter 3.

Environment in Early British Sociology: A Case Study in Exclusion

Introduction

This chapter tells the story of the establishment and early years of the Sociological Society of London and the institutionalisation of academic sociology at the London School of Economics (LSE). The story is essentially a simple one. Victor Branford and James Martin White invested large quantities of time and money in founding the Sociological Society and funding Sociology at LSE, in an attempt to help Patrick Geddes gain the academic recognition they felt was his due. Previous attempts had been made during the nineteenth century to found sociology, institutionally, as the subject concerned above all with questions of social reform. In the period of political and economic stability and growth up to 1870, these attempts had successively foundered. By the turn of the century, however, in a climate of political uncertainty and growing nationalism, amidst the movement for university extension and reform, and above all in the face of the increasingly severe problem of 'degeneration' of the working classes, the idea of a social science of sociology had begun to look much more appealing. Unfortunately, the early enthusiasts for sociology could not agree about exactly *what* it was to be, *how* to go about its study, or where to draw the boundaries between it and the other new disciplines - in particular geography, anthropology and psychology - at that time all jostling for a place in the University curriculum.

All the contending schools began from biology, and in particular from Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection, but each had a different political bias and set of objectives. The Eugenists, headed by Darwin's cousin, Francis Galton, were in the strongest position. They wanted to found sociology as Eugenics - the science of good breeding - a theme which had wide cross-party appeal. Eugenics was of interest to those with philanthropic tendencies as much as to people whose interest was social reform, national efficiency, industrial supremacy or imperialist expansion. Most importantly, Eugenics appealed to those in the middle and upper echelons of society, for some of whom the burgeoning urban masses represented a threat, where others saw an object of philanthropic duty. These people could support sociology not only intellectually, but also, more importantly, financially. Geddes' sociology, based on his earlier papers, in which he had inverted the theory of natural selection, involved the survey of cities and regions to discern all that was best and worst in the natural, built and cultural environment as a prerequisite to environmental, and consequently social improvement. Its supporters were other proponents of the social survey like Booth, certain geographers, and social reformers such as Ebenezer Howard. Hobhouse's background was academic and philosophical. He was an Oxford graduate and had constructed his theory, like Durkheim, in direct opposition to that of Spencer. Like Durkheim, too, he both accepted the theory of natural selection and argued against its applicability in modern societies.

In spite of an initial spirit of goodwill, and some degree of agreement to work together, these three competing factions vied for the right to define what sociology would become. Galton's political position was distasteful to both Geddes and Hobhouse. Geddes the biologist, however, did not deny the importance of heredity, though he believed that cultural inheritance and physical environment were at least equally, if not more, important factors in social development. Hobhouse, in an attempt to repudiate Spencerian theory

and politics, had already effectively rejected heredity as an important factor in social evolution - and in a manner very similar to Durkheim. Yet Galton and the Eugenists had little need of the nascent Sociological Society. Galton himself was able to endow a Eugenics Records Office at the University of London in 1905, and a Chair in Eugenics upon his death in 1911, with the recommendation that the first occupant should be his disciple and collaborator Karl Pearson. This left Hobhouse and Geddes. Both applied for the Chair created at LSE with Martin White's money. Why the chair was given to Hobhouse and not Geddes, when it was an open secret that it had been created for the latter, is one question that deserves some attention, if only because Hobhouse's appointment to the Chair at the end of 1907 left him in a uniquely privileged position with respect to sociology in Britain. Another question surrounds Hobhouse's attitude to Geddes and his Civics Sociology. He and Geddes *could* have collaborated; their respective visions, politics and methods *were* undoubtedly different, but they were not as different as all that. However, they did not collaborate, and in the final instance, this was disastrous for Geddes, who became, as far as British academic sociology was concerned, increasingly marginalised. By the time of his death in 1932, though he had never quite abandoned the hope of becoming accepted, and acceptable, in British sociology, and in spite of a lifetime in which he inspired at least as many people as were alienated by his somewhat forceful personality, Geddes was all but forgotten.

Geddes: from Natural to Social Science

Geddes' interest in sociology developed early, but he was still, during the 1880s, aiming to earn a living in the natural sciences. In spite of his public excursions into sociology - which included, as well as the articles so far cited, his practical social experiments and a contribution to a lecture series on the problems of distribution - Geddes was still primarily a botanist. In 1882, he

applied for, but failed to get, a Chair in Natural History at the University of Edinburgh. In 1888, he applied first for a Chair in Botany and later for the post of Examiner. His lengthy application for the Chair was accompanied by endorsements from Darwin, Wallace and Weismann, as well as his early mentor Huxley, though Huxley's comment that he had a high a opinion of Geddes' abilities and was 'well aware that his knowledge is unusually varied and extensive' (cited in Boardman, 1978: 103) was perhaps a veiled and slightly barbed reference to their earlier sociological disagreements over Spencerian theory (Boardman, 1978:113). Why Geddes failed to be appointed to the Chair in Botany is not known, but although Boardman hints that it may have been at least in part due to nepotism (Isaac Balfour, who got the job, was the son of a previous incumbent of the post), it must have been at least as much due to Geddes' lack of formal educational qualifications (Boardman, 1978:108; Meller, 1990: 26).[1]

Geddes' wealthy friend, James Martin White, subsequently endowed a Chair in Botany at University College, Dundee, especially for him. The special terms of his contract there required him to be in residence for only three months of the year, from mid-April to mid-June (Boardman: 1978:108). For the other nine months of the years from 1889 until his appointment as Professor of Sociology at the University of Bombay in 1920, Geddes continued working on other projects, including, in the short term, the extension of Edinburgh's University Hall, the University Extension Movement, and the establishment of his Summer Schools, which became 'The Edinburgh School of Sociology'. The Summer Schools at the Outlook Tower in Edinburgh, which began in 1897 were, in fact, the earliest (if unconventional) attempt to establish sociology in

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1 Boardman (1944) also suggests that Geddes' failure to get the Chair was due to his forays into economics and sociology, which was considered 'conduct unbecoming to a botanist'.

Britain as a subject in its own right, and would allow Geddes, at the first meeting of the Sociological Society of London in 1904, to describe himself (somewhat disingenuously) as 'Professor Geddes, President, Edinburgh School of Sociology (*Sociological Papers*, 1905: 283).

The Sociological Society: Foundations

The initial idea for the Society came from another of Geddes' friends, Victor Branford. Its purpose would be to provide a London platform for the dissemination of the ideas of his friend and mentor, as well as providing a forum for the discussion of developments in Social Studies, taking place in Britain and elsewhere (Meller, 1990:139; Boardman, 1944:239; 1978: 199; Halliday, 1968: 382).[2]

Branford (1864-1930) was an industrialist and financier who had been a student at Edinburgh University, where he had first come into contact with Geddes. In spite of his successful business career he had a yearning for the academic life, attended the Edinburgh Summer Schools and kept in touch with Geddes, with whom he became close friends (Meller, 1990: 14fn.). During the spring and summer of 1903, Branford, with the financial support of Martin White, but without any help from Geddes (who was at that time engaged in a survey of Dunfermline for the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust), had begun the initial tasks involved in setting up the Sociological Society. A circular was sent out to 'teachers of Philosophy, History and Economics', as well as to 'a few selected representatives of relevant scientific groups and practical interests, and a few foreign sociologists' (Collini, 1979:198). Over fifty people responded to the circular, and the society was officially constituted at a meeting held in November, 1903:

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2 Perhaps understandably, accounts by Owen (1974), Collini (1979), and Hobson and Ginsberg (1931) all of which focus on Hobhouse as the founder of British Sociology, omit any reference to Branford's and Martin White's aspirations for Geddes.

> The Right Hon. James Bryce was elected first President, J. Martin White Treasurer, Victor Branford Hon. Secretary, and among its thirty councillors were names such as Sir John Cockburn, former Premier of South Australia, Mr. H.G. Wells, and as thinly disguised instigator ex-officio, 'Professor Geddes: President, Edinburgh School of Sociology'.(Boardman, 1978: 199)

Geddes was not unique in this self-puffery. Perhaps, in his case, it was necessary, since not only was he a rank outsider - as an unknown Scot - but he had also no academic degree at all. Other members of the Council included 'Mr. L.T. Hobhouse', his friend and eventual biographer, J.A. Hobson, as well as several other acquaintances - in particular, Graham Wallace and G.P. Gooch. These three, and the majority of the other members of the Council, were described by their degrees, occupations or publications. Hobhouse, in spite of the 'Mr.' was listed as '*late* Fellow and Assistant Tutor, Corpus Christi College, Oxford', suggesting that he, as much as Geddes, felt a need to lay claim to superior status (*Sociological Papers*, 1905:283, emphasis added). Other members of the Council included the positivist, J.H. Bridges, a fellow of the Royal College of Physicians; A.C. Haddon, supporter of Geddes and lecturer in Ethnology at Cambridge; the biologist C.W. Saleeby; C.S. Loch, Professor of Political Economy at the University of London as well as the secretary of the Charity Organisation Society; and the Reverend A.L. Lilley, who was rector of St. Mary's at Paddington.

From the responses to Branford's circular it became clear that the definition and scope of sociology was still an open question. There was agreement on only a few points, which were, first, that a new Society should avoid the concentration on 'Drink, Drainage and Divorce' or the 'construction of drains and chimney pots', which had been characteristic of the earlier, and now defunct, National Association for the Promotion of Social Science. Secondly, there appeared to be general agreement that sociology should be a science, and discover 'laws' which would yield some guidance as to matters of

social reform. In particular, it was agreed that sociology should be an evolutionary science. There was also a certain amount of agreement that sociology should be a synthesising or co-ordinating science, which would gather together the 'facts' known about society and social life which had by now been gathered by a variety of social sciences (Collini, 1979:199; see also Abrams, 1968).

Geddes, Branford, and Hobhouse, as well as H.G. Wells, Benjamin Kidd, J.A. Hobson and G.P. Gooch, formed the first editorial committee for the Society's journal *Sociological Papers*. It was these men who drew up an Addendum to the first issue, in which (presumably on the basis of the first year's discussions) the scope and aims of the society were outlined in detail. These were to be 'scientific, educational and practical', and to promote investigation in the social sciences. Its scope was to be 'the whole phenomena of society', which were to be investigated from every possible angle, 'with increasing precision and completeness'. In all this the Society would function as a common meeting ground for all the various social sciences. It would be the forum at which each of the differing social perspectives advanced their contribution to 'a fuller Social Philosophy, including the natural and civil history of man, his achievements and his ideals'.

> This conception of social evolution involves a clearer valuation of the conditions and forces which respectively hinder or help development, which make towards degeneration or towards progress. The physician and the alienist, the criminologist and the jurist, have here again their common meeting ground with hygienist and educationist, with philanthropist, social reformer and politician, with journalist and cleric. (*Sociological Papers*, 1905: 284)

Though Geddes' unmistakable written style is absent from this statement of aims and definition, his mark is indelibly imprinted on it, in the references to the practical and educational aims of the Society, and the insistence on man's 'natural history', as well as in the insistence on its

synthesising role. The Appendix notes further that J. Martin White has endowed the University of London with a fund to be used for the purpose of establishing sociology there.

Sociology at LSE: Foundations

Meanwhile, in June 1903, Martin White had written to Sir Arthur Rücker, the Principal of the University of London, with a formal offer of £1000 to be spent over several years for the provision of 'a preliminary course or courses of lectures in sociology.' He defined sociology as

> the study of social organisation, development and ideals, past and present, over the world, from the lowest to the highest forms; with the object not only of constructing a scientific theory of society, but also of associating such theory with the highest philosophical thought, and of indicating the bearing of such knowledge on practical life. (Letter from J.M. White to Sir A.W. Rücker, June 29th, 1903, cited in Fincham, 1975: 32)

The Committee set up at the University to consider this gift proposed that since there were already several courses in London more or less concerned with sociology - in particular those run by the School of Sociology set up only two years before, in 1902, by the Charity Organisation Society, the courses set up with the money should cover areas not already covered by these. The lecturers appointed by the committee would be eligible to be on the Board of Studies in Economics at the University of London, and should teach at places where the students were already studying related or relevant subjects. This effectively ensured that LSE would become *the* centre for sociology, which became, in 1904-5, an optional honours subject for the BSc in Economics and the BA in philosophy (Fincham, 1975:25-33).

Two Professorial Candidates

During these early years of the century, Hobhouse - the man who would eventually become Britain's first Professor of sociology - was, like Geddes,

actively in search of a job. The contrast between their backgrounds is striking, and it is likely that as a result of his family's socio-economic status his prospects were better than Geddes'. The Hobhouses had been prosperous Bristol merchants during the eighteenth century (Hobson and Ginsberg, 1931: 16). Geddes' father, on the other hand, orphaned at a young age through the death of his peasant parents in a cholera epidemic in Glasgow, had been a Sergeant-Major of a Highland Regiment, the Black Watch (Meller, 1990:5). Although, like Geddes' father in his later years, Hobhouse's father was a member of the clergy, this was orthodox Church of England, rather than non-conformist 'Free Kirk'. And unlike Geddes, who was largely self educated, Hobhouse, while at Marlborough College, won a Classics Scholarship to Oxford, where he remained, as student, Tutor and Fellow, between 1883 and 1897. At that point, he abandoned the academic life - supposedly forever - in favour of a job on the *Manchester Guardian*, and a life of 'political activism' (Hobson and Ginsberg, 1931: 15-37).

Hobhouse did not abandon his academic work, however, and within a few years found the strain of combining journalism with philosophy too much. Consequently, he moved his family from Manchester to London in the Autumn of 1902, where, although he had hoped to devote himself full-time to his philosophy, he found himself in financial difficulties after an unexpected 'heavy loss of . . . financial resources' and was forced to look for a job. He accepted, first, the post of Secretary of the Free Trade Union, and then the job of Political Editor of the new daily paper, *The Tribune*. Both jobs were uncongenial to him, and he resigned from the latter at the beginning of 1907. It was perhaps fortunate, as Hobson remarked, that Hobhouse had found himself in London, just as the movement to found the Sociological Society was getting underway (Hobson and Ginsberg, 1931: 41-42), since his involvement served as a useful preparation for his move back to the academic life in 1907. More particularly, perhaps, it was fortunate that his early involvement with British

sociology, gave him, at an early stage, a formative role in its introduction to the LSE.

Academic Sociology Defined

Under the terms of the 1903 Martin White Benefaction, Hobhouse offered his services to the University and gave one course of lectures 'without remuneration' on 'Comparative Ethics', during the academic year 1904-5 (Hobson and Ginsberg, 1931: 43). These lectures (which were attended by 23 students in 1904 (Fincham, 1975: 33)), did provide him with one definite advantage, even if they brought him no money. He was eligible, since he was lecturing in connection with the Martin White Benefaction, to sit on the Board of Studies, which drew up a general scheme of studies in Sociology during the academic year 1904-5. This was divided into two parts: Social Evolution, to be studied both descriptively and theoretically; and Social Philosophy. There was also a suggestion that the more advanced students should gain some knowledge of recent psychological treatments of ethics and morality. The more detailed Official Syllabus, published in the University of London Calendar for 1906-7, was developed on the basis of this (Fincham, 1975: 40). It is reproduced as Figure 4, on the following page.

The syllabus is heavily biased towards psychology, which is likely to have been due to Hobhouse's presence on the Board. Hobhouse had published *Mind in Evolution*, which was largely a work on animal and human psychology, in 1901, making him eminently qualifed to teach the subject. It is also worth noting the emphasis on morality, and moral evolution, bearing in mind that Hobhouse published *Morals in Evolution*, the sequel to *Mind*, in 1906. Yet he was not made Professor of Sociology at LSE until 1907. It is possible, therefore, that his contribution to defining the sociology syllabus was a factor in his eventual ascendancy to the Chair, since the scope of the subject, as defined by the syllabus, so closely matched his own academic interests.

Figure 4: The Official London Syllabus, 1906 (Source, Fincham, 1975)

A. Comparative Study of Social Institutions

1. Sociology in its relations to Biology and Psychology. The principle of evolution applied to Social Phenomena.
2. Forms of Social Organisation

- A] The family - Maternal and Paternal Descent. Power of the Head of the Family. Joints and Individual Property. Regulation of Marriage. Position of women.
- B] Society - The Clan and the Tribe. Monarchy. Feudalism, the City State. The Modern State. Federal Government.

3. The Maintenance of Social Order.

- The Blood Feud. Retaliation. Compensation. Primitive Courts and Processes. The Oaths and the Ordeal. Growth of Public Justice and Rational Procedure. Responsibility, Punishment and the Prevention of Crime.

4. The Social Structure.

- Slavery, Serfdom, Free Labour, and Industrial Co-operation. Caste and Class Distinctions. Civil and Political Equality.

5. Religions and other beliefs in their bearings on Social Relations.

- Influence of Magic, Animism, Ancestor Worship, Polytheism, The World Religions, on Social Morality. Antithesis of Temporal and Spiritual Powers

B. Psychology

1. The Psychological Standpoint.
2. Comparative Study of Mental Structure

- A] in Animals and Man
- B] in Child and Adult.
- C] in Primitive and Advanced Peoples

3. The Psychological Bases of Social Institutions

- A] Ideas of morals and Political Obligations.
- B] Nature and Development of Moral Faculty, Psychology of Sympathy, Self-love, Moral Sense, Conscience. The idea of Personality.
- C] Psychology of Responsibility - Analysis of Will, Desire, Impulse, Motive, Intention.

4. Psychological element in

- A] Aesthetic Development
- B] Scientific Development
- C] Religious Development

C. Ethnology

- The physical, mental cultural and social characteristics of the main varieties of mankind
- The present geographic distribution of races and peoples, and their former wanderings.
- The antiquity of man, the physical characteristics of prehistoric peoples and the evolution of their culture.
- A detailed acquaintance with a selected continent, or area, comprising a knowledge of the main social groups in the region selected, their environment (physical and biological), occupation, property, culture, social structure, religion, expansion and their influence on one another.

Sociological Society: Early Years

The development of the Sociological Society went on largely independently of sociology's academic foundations, though Branford, Martin White and Hobhouse (and, to a lesser extent Geddes) were involved in both from the start The three volumes of *Sociological Papers*, which were published annually for the years 1904 to 1906, are dominated by the debate between the Eugenists and the Civics sociologists, and by the question of the definition, role and purpose of sociology and its relationship with other disciplines. Hobhouse took relatively little part in the proceedings.[3] He was on the editorial committee, and he contributed to certain discussions, but did not present a paper at any of the Society's meetings.

Superficially, these early years provided a good start for the new Society and the new subject. But in 1907 the *Sociological Papers* were abandoned, the Eugenists and the Civics sociologists each formed separate committees within the Society and Hobhouse, at the end of the year, accepted the Martin White Chair at LSE. By 1908 there was a new journal - the quarterly *Sociological Review* - edited by Hobhouse and with a fundamentally different character. In 1910, Hobhouse resigned from his editorial role 'partly from pressure of other work, but partly also from a divergence of view as to the conduct and contents of such a review that had arisen between him and other active supporters of the society'.(Hobson and Ginsberg, 193:46; *Sociological Review*, 1910: 226). In April 1911, Branford's resignation from his role of Honorary Secretary to the Sociological Society was announced in the pages of the *Review*. (1911:175). Hobhouse, though he continued to be a member, increasingly distanced himself, and

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3 Dahrendorf, (1995: 101) writes that Hobhouse chaired many meetings of the society and contributed to most of them. This is incorrect. Hobhouse's contribution to the active proceedings of the society is very much smaller than that of Geddes, who presented several papers to Hobhouse's none. By 1906, it seems, Hobhouse had given up attending the meetings at all, for there is no comment of his on any of the papers.

consequently academic sociology (of which he was certainly the primary, if not the sole representative), from both the Sociological Society and its *Review*.

The signs, then, point to some kind of dispute at the Sociological Society during its early years. Yet sociology's historians have been somewhat coy about its nature and causes. This coyness is likely to be rooted partly in the subject - eugenics - around which the dispute ostensibly revolved. Eugenics, although it had many supporters in the first quarter of the century, has acquired, as a result of its association with the worst excesses of Fascism in the second World War, extremely unpleasant associations, so that it would be understandable for post-war sociologists to wish to distance both themselves, and their discipline, from it. Cursory and superficial treatment of any dispute may also reflect, however, a reluctance to concede that personal loyalties, alliances or enmity play any significant role in the reception and diffusion of academic work, and a desire to believe that the theories and methods that came to be associated with sociology were the only possible choice - that whatever went on in those early days, the outcome was all for the best in the best of all possible worlds. Certainly, so long as Geddes continues to be regarded as a marginal figure - eccentric, amateur and hopelessly confused, the dispute itself is of little interest. For those with an interest in the fate of the earliest example of environmental sociology in Britain, however, the dispute and its outcome was highly consequential. It is therefore important, and may be instructive for contemporary sociology, to attempt to unravel its manifold threads.

Historical Accounts of the Early Years

John Owen, in his 1974 study of Hobhouse avoids the subject of Eugenics altogether. Collini, also primarily interested in Hobhouse, insists on his unequivocal rejection of eugenics (1979: 198-208). He notes the 'conflict' at the Society (ibid: 219-220), but does not connect this to eugenics. Halliday's (1968) account is the most explicit. He notes Branford's complaint, which was that Ethics was being advanced at the expense of Civics and Eugenics - and suggests that this was probably an over-simplified

description of the nature of the dispute, which became more serious when Hobhouse became Martin White Professor. He adds that Hobhouse was obliged to reject Civics because of its geographical determinism (1968: 386-389). Mitchell believes that the dispute over the Chair was at the root of the matter, and spilled over into the Society. He notes, also, that the personalities of the two major protagonists, Hobhouse and Geddes, were incompatible (1968: 221). Hawthorn argues that Hobhouse, once enthroned in the Martin White Chair, was embarrassed by the 'romantic effusions' of Branford and Geddes, and consequently ignored them (1976: 167). Bulmer (1985: 10) believes that 'coolness' between Hobhouse and Geddes on intellectual matters, as well as competition for the Martin White Chair, led to Hobhouse's withdrawal from the Society. Abrams (1985: 195-6) represents the dispute somewhat obliquely, as one between Geddes' conviction that social science is 'lived not written' and Hobhouse as an 'idol' of academic 'purity' untainted by empirical studies. Meller suggests that a presentation made by Geddes before the Sociological Society, in which he appears to support Galton's new science of Eugenics, may have been at the root of the rejection of Civics by the Ethical school. It was, she suggests, an attempt to inspire his audience and thus to gain needed financial resources for his vision of sociology (1990: 142). These accounts are none of them without substance, but they are all partial accounts, which hint at, rather than make explicit, the exact nature of the dispute and its consequences.

The Dispute at the Sociological Society

Textual evidence, however, indicates that not only did a dispute occur, but that its nature was complex, and its effects lasting. Certainly, the social, economic and intellectual climate of the time had something to do with it. Nationalism, while it may have had causes primarily to do with imperialism and economics, spilled over into intellectual life. Sociology was doing better in foreign universities than at home, leading to an atmosphere of academic jealousy. Likewise, domestic socio-economic conditions, while being for some a matter of philanthropic duty, were for others a

matter of political concern, and yet others a matter of increasing national insecurity. Finally, Darwin's theory was an important factor, in both a negative and a positive sense. It was important in a negative sense, theoretically, because of what it suggested about the unavoidable causes and conditions of human evolution, and it was important in a positive sense methodologically. Darwin's observational skill and attention to detail became the model for science in general. Darwin's achievement inspired the early sociologists to create sociology as a science like biology, capable of synthesising all social knowledge.

The Geddesian school, led rather by Branford than by Geddes himself, attempted to align sociology with the Durkheimian school in France. Branford's aim appeared to be to establish sociology as the post-Comtean 'Queen of the Social Sciences'; as a subject with a synthesising role, which could bring all social knowledge together under a single theoretical umbrella. Moreover, it is likely that he envisaged that sociology in Britain could be organised institutionally as it had been in France, by dividing up the academic labour into various departments - perhaps according to the broad classificatory scheme already outlined by Geddes. Galton's advocate, Pearson, did not agree. For him, if anyone was to be Sociology's great man of science, it was, naturally, Galton himself, who had come out of retirement especially to deliver his first paper at the Sociological Society. The early discussions there show how few potential sociologists were in accord with either Galton's method or his politics. Hobhouse kept his distance from this disagreement initially. Yet his editorial experience as a journalist and his academic background must have given him a certain leverage on the Society's Council and Editorial Committee in those early days - a leverage that became much greater after his appointment as Martin White Professor at LSE. He began to call the shots - to insist on the publication of particular articles over others, effectively excluding both eugenics and civics. Eugenics was distasteful to him, not so much for what it claimed to show - that mental characteristics were as much inherited as physical, as for the illiberal policies that flowed from it. It is a more complex matter to understand why he excluded Civics. Branford complained that Hobhouse did not really

understand Civics. This may be true but seems unlikely. Again, it may be at least partially true that he was put off by Geddes' apparent alignment of Civics and Eugenics in 1904, or by Geddes' refusal, in general, to distance himself from the biological sciences. As well as this, however, it seems to have been a matter of politics, academic jealousy and personalities - of Hobhouse using his superior status to marginalise any political or academic position which did not wholly accord with, or support, his own, and Geddes responding by attacking all the more virulently the separation, specialisation and most importantly isolation of academic sociology behind the wall of the academy.

Branford Appeals to Durkheim

One advantage of the particular format of the *Sociological Papers*, in which the papers read to the society and discussions which followed them are reproduced verbatim, is that the complex contours of debate and disagreement, of alliance and enmity, as well as something of the personalities of various protagonists and the atmosphere in which the meetings took place, begin to emerge. Who spoke when, and about what; who attended this particular meeting rather than that one; who aligned himself or herself with whom - all these things suggest the charged atmosphere of the meetings, and the excitement which attended the birth pains of the new discipline - though there must have been many private conversations and *sotto voce* remarks that would reveal more, if they had been recorded.

The very first article in the first volume was written by Branford, entitled 'On the Origins and Use of the Word Sociology' (Branford, 1905a). This had been enclosed with his circular, and summarised the history of sociology, from its introduction by Comte to its adoption by J.S. Mill, to the influence of Spencer in bringing it into international usage. Branford noted the establishment of sociology in first France, then Italy, Belgium, America, and Germany, and compared the situation there to its undeveloped condition in Britain.

In France, Branford noted the work of Tarde, Durkheim, and De Roberty, and the foundation of the International Institute of Sociology in 1893, the publication of the *Revue Internationale de Sociologie,* the addition of a sociology section to the *Revue Philosophique* and the foundation of the *Année Sociologique* in 1898. Italy had at least five journals, he said, 'devoted mainly or exclusively to sociological work' and even a 'sociological review of reviews!'. He mentioned the foundation of the Université Nouvelle in Brussels - a specifically sociological institution under De Greef; the work of Simmel and Tönnies in Germany; the elaborately equipped sociological department of Chicago University and the publication of the *American Journal of Sociology.*

This reference to foreign sociology, in an appeal for support, illustrates a high degree of awareness of the international context. It also amounts to an appeal to nationalist sentiment. Britain stood alone, claimed Branford, in its neglect of sociology, while other nations forged ahead. Yet it is clear, at the same time, that the model for the development of British sociology, for Branford, was the French Durkheimian school, since in order to illustrate the scope and direction that sociology should take in Britain, he reproduced an analysis of sociological literature, from the *Année Sociologique* for 1902. This attempted alliance seems rather odd at first sight. An overtly environmental sociology seems to have little in common with a sociology which confined it self to the study of moral life and 'social facts' We should remember, however, that during these years, Durkheim was making a determined attempt to absorb Vidalien human geography, with the consequence that 'morphologie sociale' had, temporarily at least, acquired a higher status in the contents of the *Année* than Durkheim would finally allow (see above, Chapter 1).

Karl Pearson Fires the First Shot

Francis Galton's paper, read on 16th May, was entitled 'Eugenics: its definition, scope and aim'. He defined Eugenics as 'the science that deals with all influences that improve the inborn qualities of a race', adding that it was also concerned with all influences that *develop* inborn qualities to the utmost advantage (Galton, 1905: 45). He went on to

claim that the aim of Eugenics was 'to bring as many influences as can reasonably be employed, to cause the useful classes in the community to contribute *more* than their proportion to the next generation' (ibid: 47), and laid out some of the means by which a 'learned and active Society such as the Sociological' might go about this, as a matter of 'national importance'. Galton, in spite of his claim to be interested in nurture, was clearly convinced of the over-riding utility of the manipulation of nature. Instead of 'natural selection', he proposed human selection via a programme of (supposedly ameliorative) breeding: 'What Nature does blindly, slowly and ruthlessly, man may do providently quickly and kindly' (ibid: 50).

Galton's collaborator and disciple, Karl Pearson, (at that time Professor of Applied Mathematics at University College, London), was chairing the meeting. He rose to open the discussion, scathingly declaring that he did *not* believe that the Sociological Society - which seemed to him to be a 'herd without its leader' - of which he was *not* a member, and where he would *not* ordinarily wish to be seen, could found a new branch of science. This must be achieved by one 'great thinker, a Descartes, a Newton... a Darwin or a Pasteur' (*Sociological Papers* 1905: 52). Pearson went on to make it perfectly plain that he had only come to the meeting to support Galton's application for that post! (ibid: 53).

Pearson's declaration obviously (and quite understandably) angered Branford,[4] who, in setting up the society, had wished to promote Geddes' work, and was also quite clearly convinced that the model of sociology provided by the Durkheimian school was the right way for the Society to proceed. He does not appear to have been at the meeting, but was stung to respond in writing to Pearson in a strongly worded article appended to his paper on the origin and use of the word sociology (Branford, 1905b). There, he pointed out that Darwin's achievement had been made possible only

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4 In Branford's personality, according to Mumford, (1948: 683) was combined a 'worldly shrewdness, an ability to appraise all the mischief and madness of his fellows, and a wild devotion to losing causes and wild ideals', (though since the last trait might have been seen differently had Geddes' fate been different, it should perhaps be discounted).

as a result of the legions of people who had done biological research before him. He followed this in sarcastic tone, claiming that - 'To sit down and await the avatar of such an impossibilist hero is no ideal either of religion or science, but a reversion to fetishistic obsession'! (Branford, 1905b: 41-2)

Moreover, the discussants who rose after Pearson made it perfectly plain that they did not believe that Eugenics could deliver what Galton was claiming for it. Some begged caution due to the complexity of the laws of heredity - 'we must not be hasty in coming to conclusions and laying down any rules for the breeding of human beings and the development of a Eugenic conscience' (*Sociological Papers* 1905: 54-5). Another pointed to the dangers of incestuous breeding among the wealthy (ibid: 56); and yet others to the importance of food and environment in childhood (ibid: 58). H.G. Wells expressed the opinion that criminals, who according to Galton should be prevented from breeding, 'were the brightest and boldest members of families living under impossible conditions' (ibid: 59). Lady Victoria Welby, one of the few women who were present, commented that Galton chose to measure heredity only through the male line, and followed this with a plea for better treatment of women generally (ibid: 60). Only one speaker, apart from the Chairman, Pearson, appeared to support Galton without considerable reserve (ibid: 56-8). This was Professor Weldon, who had collaborated with Pearson in 1901, to found the journal *Biometrika* (Meller, 1990: 141).

The last to speak was Hobhouse, who spoke in measured tones, by comparison with some other critics. People (like himself) who were 'only students of sociology' he said, who could not 'lay any claim whatever to be biologists, ought to keep silent'. Nevertheless, he went on to express his opinion that any regulation of breeding, which involved 'one of the most powerful of human passions', would require 'highly perfected knowledge':

> As to the two factors, stock and environment, no one can doubt that both are of fundamental importance in relation to the welfare of society; . . . if the kind of precise knowledge which I desiderate could be laid before us by the biologist, it would have considerable influence on our

> views not only of what is ethically right, but of what could be legislatively enforced. Of these two factors. . . which can we modify with the greater ease and certainty of not doing harm? It is fairly obvious that we can affect the environment of mankind in certain definite ways . . . .When we come to bring stock into consideration, we are dealing with that which is still very largely unknown. *At the same time we owe a great deal of thanks to Mr. Galton for raising this subject. The bare conception of a conscious selection as a way in which educated society would deal with stock is infinitely higher than that of natural selection with which biologists have confronted every proposal of sociology.* . . . But until we have far more knowledge and agreement as to criteria of conscious selection, I fear we cannot, as sociologists, expect to do much for society along these lines (*Sociological Papers,* 1905: 63, emphasis added)

This apparent readiness to take eugenics seriously was somewhat disingenuous of Hobhouse, since he had already, by this time, published *Mind in Evolution* (1901), in which he expressed his view that the importance of biological (Darwinian) evolution declined as 'mind' advanced. Yet that Eugenics, as preached by Galton, claimed to be able to produce more highly evolved - physically and mentally superior - individuals, by conscious and deliberate selection, appealed to Hobhouse, who abhorred the idea of evolution as a blindly determinist biological process, which denied humanity - if not actually of free-will - then at least of the possibility of actively improving the world through rational action (Freeden, 1978: 185-6). He was, however, as dubious about Galton's political posture as the other critics were of his scientific theory. Even so he is prepared to indicate that Eugenics might be worthy of serious consideration, *if properly developed into a system of 'highly perfected knowledge'*.

Civics and the Durkheimian School

At the next meeting of the Society, on June 20th, abstracts of two papers by Durkheim and Branford 'On the Relation of Sociology to Philosophy and to the Social Sciences' were read to the Society (Durkheim, 1905; Branford, 1905c).

There is no indication as to which of the founding members of the Sociological Society was responsible for suggesting or inviting a contribution from Durkheim, but it is likely that the juxtaposition of Branford's contribution with Durkheim's is

significant.[5] Branford had referred to the contents of the *Année Sociologique* in his earlier paper, sent out with the circular, and had probably already read (at least) the article by Durkheim and Fauconnet on 'Sociology and the Social Sciences' which is reprinted in the *Sociological Papers* for 1904 (published 1905). This had, however, been published previously in the *Revue Philosophique* for 1903, to which Branford had also referred. Perhaps the substantial agreement of the two papers is also significant. Branford, as in his earlier appeal to the *Année Sociologique*, was attempting to associate Geddes' sociology with that of Durkheim, whose reputation as an eminent sociologist (perhaps even *the* eminent sociologist) was not, at that time, in dispute.

Durkheim's paper began with the categorical statement that the 'prime postulate of a science of society is the inclusion of human phenomena within the unity of nature' (Durkheim, 1905: 197). It was only by beginning from this assumption, he said, that 'natural laws' would emerge from the detailed study of all aspects of social life. Comte and Spencer both recognised the necessity of extending the idea of natural law to human societies (specifically the law of evolution), but both studied such matters in a speculative or philosophical manner, rather than empirically, or scientifically. Durkheim insisted that each of the many inter-related aspects of social life must now be studied in detail by specialist sciences.(ibid: 198) It was inadequate, however, for the social sciences to operate in isolation from each other, as they had been doing up to now. Sociology, as a 'unified science of society' (ibid: 199) must not only systematise the knowledge derived from these detailed researches, but must 'interpenetrate the diverse technical studies more fully with the sociological conception of unity'.

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5 Daniel Becquemont, in a recent (1995) article, suggests that it was Hobhouse who invited Durkheim. Durkheim was Hobhouse's representative, he says, and Branford, Geddes'. This may be true, but seems unlikely, for the reasons given above, and also because Hobhouse, far from being a supporter of Durkheim's, would, only a few years later, begin to refer to him as the author of the 'unsound group mind' theory. In addition the substantial agreement of the two abstracts perhaps indicates an attempt by Branford to 'build' on what Durkheim had said. Lastly, we might wonder why, if Hobhouse had invited Durkheim, he chose not to present a similar paper at this meeting.

> . . . the unity of the social kingdom cannot hope to find an adequate expression in a few general and philosophical formulae detached from the facts and the detail of specialist research. An adequate sociology can only have for its organ a body of sciences distinct but animated by the sentiment of their solidarity. And it may be predicted that these sciences, once organised, will return with accumulated interest to philosophy what they have borrowed from it. (Durkheim, 1905: 200)

Branford, in his paper, agreed that the most pressing problem for sociology was that of 'the systematisation of the several sociological specialisms', although he laid additional stress on the interrelation between theory and practice, and on the need for the classification not only of the sciences in general, but also of social knowledge. He also posed in plain language a question only strongly implied by Durkheim: 'How far does the history of Biology afford a suggestive instance of a parallel problem?' (Branford, 1905c: 201) Recent advances in Biology, he suggested, had resulted in the 'schematisation of a large number of practically independent and dispersive specialisms by subordination to a few elemental categories of known relationship' (ibid.). That he should have put the matter in this way illustrates *the central importance of Darwin* for the early sociologists. Sociology, in order to gain the respectability necessary to its development as an academic subject, needed to be able to claim both that it was like biology - *a science which could eventually provide an overall theoretical perspective for social research,* and distinct from it - to the extent that social evolution could not be reduced to biological evolution.

In the lengthy discussion which followed the presentation of Durkheim's and Branford's papers it is clear that there was no agreement either on the nature of sociology, or on the question of its relationship to the other social sciences. According to the disciplinary persuasion of various speakers, sociology was to be subsumed under the rubric of history or psychology, or to subsume these under itself; it should systematise all knowledge pertaining to the social world, or should beware of systematising too soon; it was to be *the* science of society, or could not be scientific because there were no such things as historical laws. Rather more of the discussion was critical than sympathetic; one contributor indicated that sociology, as defined by

Durkheim and Branford, was doomed to be a futile activity.[6] Hobhouse spoke last: he wished only to support both speakers in the face of an audience he felt were too critical. He concluded his remarks on the subject of the future co-ordination of the social sciences and the utility of collating of a 'body of truth' for comparative study, by saying that though he did not personally agree with every word spoken by either Durkheim or Branford, it seemed to him that they deserved thanks for setting before the Society both 'what sociology claims to be at the present time' and 'the next step which investigation ought to take' (*Sociological Papers*, 1905:215-6). Nevertheless, he also suggested that the student of sociology, if he followed the methods set out by both Branford and Durkheim, would 'find much irrelevant detail' which he would discard, the better to concentrate on the really important sociological issues and their relation to one another. There is a hint here that his conception of the scope and subject matter of the new discipline was less broad than either Branford's or Durkheim's appeared to be.

Civics and Eugenics

Hobhouse's response to Geddes' paper at the following meeting remains unknown, for he was either absent or silent on this occasion. Geddes himself had been absent from the earlier meetings. He had come down to London towards the close of 1903, to join Branford in setting up the Sociological Society, with one job already in hand - that of writing up a report for the Carnegie Dunfermline Trust, which would occupy him for much of his time in London during 1904 (Boardman: 1978: 199), and to which he referred several times in his presentations.[7] But his Chair at Dundee required his presence during the months of April, May and June, which had prevented him from

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6 This suggestion was made by Dr. Emil Reich, *Sociological Papers*, 1905: 209-210

7 Referring to the Dunfermline Report probably did not help Geddes to get his ideas across, since many members of his audience would have been ignorant of the distinctive features of the Scottish landscape (which was peripheral in relation to London's centrality, though in name they were part of a single nation) and the geography of the cities he used to illustrate his talks.

attending the earlier meetings. He read his paper, with several lengthy digressions from the printed text submitted,[8] on July 18th.

He began by formally introducing Civics - as a department of applied sociology of use to 'practical men and civic workers', by saying that useful methods for the systematic survey of cities might gradually develop towards an orderly Regional Survey out of 'the experience of any moderately travelled observer of varied interests' who has gained a wide knowledge of many different places, rather than simply emerging from study itself (Geddes, 1905: 104).

Declaring that 'Applied Sociology in general, and Civics, as one of its main departments, may be defined as the application of Social Survey to Social Service' (ibid: 103-4), Geddes abandoned, temporarily, his pre-prepared paper, and spoke of the importance and utility of the integration of science with 'art', by which he appears to have meant practical 'civic' art. It was at this point that he made what Meller suggests was his fatal mistake, from the point of view of his professional relationship with Hobhouse. He attempted to illustrate the integration of science with (civic or social) art by referring to the 'connection between a scientific demography and a practical eugenics'. And continued

> . . . this study of the community in the aggregate finds its natural parallel and complement in the study of the community as an integrate, with material and immaterial structures and functions, which we call the city. . . .the improvement of the individuals of the community, which is the aim of eugenics, involves a corresponding civic progress. Using (for the moment at least) a parallel nomenclature, we see that the sociologist is not only concerned with demography, but with "politography," and that eugenics is inseparable from "politogenics." For the struggle for existence, . . . is not only an intra-civic, but an inter-civic process, and . . . ameliorative selection, now clearly sought for the individual in detail as eugenics, is inseparable from a corresponding civic art - a literal "Eu-politogenics." (Geddes, 1905:104)

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8 That they were digressions is indicated by the use of the same smaller typeface used for the verbal discussions, at intervals throughout the paper.

Meller has suggested that Geddes created this association (on the spur of the moment?) between Civics and Eugenics as a result of his difficult position as Branford's 'great man' of sociology in the face of Galton's much more numerous following, and Pearson's advocacy (Meller, 1990:140-142). She has pointed out that Galton had many wealthy followers who could offer the financial support that Geddes was so much in need of, and that there were certain members of the provisional Committee who did not support Geddes, or his vision; she mentions, in particular, C.S. Loch and E.J. Urwick of the Charity Organisation Society. Thus, according to Meller, Geddes' attempt to align his own position with that of Galton was an attempt to garner support, both intellectual and financial. Certainly, Eugenics was extremely popular during the early years of the century and, as Searle has suggested, there *were* some others who 'deliberately posed as eugenists in order to attract attention to some other cause they wished to promote' (Searle, 1976: 14). Moreover, since Galton's Eugenic programme had only been announced to the public in 1901, when he had treated the Anthropological Institute to a lecture entitled 'The Possible Improvement of the Human Breed Under the Existing Conditions of Law and Sentiment', there remained a degree of confusion in the minds of some of its followers, as to exactly what sort of 'reforms' the Eugenists were proposing (Searle, 1976: 9-15).

What is *certain,* however, is that Geddes was *not* a eugenist; nor was Civics sociology reducible to eugenics generally (Chapter 2; and Halliday, 1968: 385-6). And although Geddes, as a biologist, refused to reject the importance of heredity, it is extremely unlikely that he would have wished to be associated with statistics as practised by Galton, who claimed to have proved that good stock begat good stock by his over-simplistic study of the family lineages of the 'gifted' families of some of the

fellows of the Royal Society (including his own).[9] Galton, to be sure, had claimed in his paper on the scope and definition of Eugenics, that the subject was just as much about the societal influences that developed inborn qualities, as it was about improving those qualities themselves. Yet his presentations to the Sociological Society contain a number of policy suggestions that Geddes - who had set up home with his wife on the top floor of an Edinburgh tenement as part of a practical sociological experiment in amelioration - must have found unpalatable, to say the least.

What *is* likely is that Geddes, as well as perhaps hoping to attract financial support for his own work, was interested primarily in presenting sociology as a *unified subject* - which was what both Durkheim and Branford had urged upon the Society at the previous meeting. Branford, indeed, in his attack upon Pearson after the second meeting, had written that

> The general discipline derived from the doctrine of evolution (in the one case organic, in the other social evolution) has done something towards organising these numerous and dispersive specialisms into a co-ordinated body of unified truth. But, hitherto, this unifying task has been but inadequately performed, alike in biology and in sociology. There are in both sciences whole groups of rebellious specialists, who not only decry the competence and sufficiency of the synthetic leaders, but who even deny the relevance of all synthetic doctrine, and disclaim all need for architectonic intervention in the organisation of specialisms.(Branford, 1905b: 40-41)

Half a page later, he had followed this with a plea for unity.

> It is good, because necessary, that every large problem should be parcelled out amongst moderately large squads of labourers specialised for their several tasks. But it is not good that discord should be so conspicuous as to impress the observer - even though he be a superficial observer - with the competitive rather than with the co-operative aspect of the process.(ibid: 41)

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9 The results of this extremely over-simplistic study, which has not 'aged' at all well, are appended to Galton's article on Eugenics (1905b:85-99) It uses as proof of the heritability of genius, for example, the Darwin family (to whom Galton was related) which had produced a good number of geniuses, who were judged as such on the basis of financial or commercial as well as intellectual achievements.

In claiming the inseparability of Civics from Eugenics, therefore, Geddes was attempting to 'synthesise' Eugenics and Civics in the interests of the 'scientific' or theoretical unity that sociology supposedly needed. Synthesis was, in fact, one of Geddes' main objectives (Halliday, 1968:385); he was appalled by the separation of specialist disciplines that was then underway as the new human oriented studies established themselves in the universities - and in his own work attempted to unite natural with several of the social sciences. In any case, *this was the only reference to Eugenics that Geddes made in the whole of his presentation at this meeting.*

Civics and Ethical Sociology

The battle between the Eugenists and the Civics Sociologists which is evident in the *Papers,* has been frequently noted by historians (Meller, 1990; Collini, 1979; Abrams, 1968; Halliday, 1968). 'Ethical' sociology is most often presumed to have been the other major contender, and is associated above all with Hobhouse (Collini, 1979; Abrams, 1968; Halliday, 1968). In fact, Hobhouse appears to have taken a much quieter role in the Society than either Geddes or Galton, and though sociology as 'ethics' does make an appearance, this by no means comes exclusively, or even mainly, from Hobhouse in the first instance. He did not present a paper at any of the Society's meetings, in spite of the fact that either *Mind in Evolution* (1901) or *Democracy and Reaction* (1904), would have furnished him with at least one presentation with little preparation. And although he was Chairman of the Editorial Committee of the *Sociological Papers* throughout, it appears to have been Branford who did much of the physical work associated with this function (Report of the Council for the Year 1910, 1911: 176).

The relationship between sociology as Civics and sociology as Ethics would be an important one, particularly after 1907, when Hobhouse became the first Martin White Professor, as well as the editor of the *Sociological Review*, which took over from the *Sociological Papers*, from 1908. This dual role would put Hobhouse in a position of unprecedented power with respect to the development of sociology.

Although the *Review* remained the organ of the Sociological Society, which continued to operate separately from the newly established Department of Sociology at the University of London, Hobhouse's editorial function enabled him to shape both organisations. There is little evidence in the early *Sociological Papers*, however, of Hobhouse's opinion of Civics.

Hobhouse: Mind in Evolution

During his Oxford years, the main influences on Hobhouse's thinking had been the idealist philosophy of T.H. Green, as well as the somewhat contradictory work of J.S. Mill, and the sociology of Comte and Spencer. Green's philosophy held that reality is essentially spiritual, and that spiritual development was a fundamental principle of the world order (Hobson and Ginsberg, 1931: 101). Green argued that knowledge of objects implied some unifying principle - something a priori or permanent among the flux of sense impressions - a sort of eternal consciousness of the relations between things. But though Hobhouse was impressed with this, he found that he could not bring himself to believe that all reality was spiritual. He believed that the knowledge we have of the relations between things does not create those relations themselves. The relations exist, and we learn the relations (ibid: 103).

From Comte, Hobhouse took the idea of the interconnectedness of all social phenomena and consequently the need for a synthetic science which would draw together all knowledge about social life. He considered that Comte was correct to believe that the emergence of sociology - as a positive science - marked a definite step forward in human development. As with Comte, there was a sort of religious humanitarianism in Hobhouse's work, based on the idea of a collective spiritual principle of humanity, shaping and directing human action.

The years he spent at Oxford were also the years during which the intellectual storm caused by the publication of Darwin's theory was at its height (Owen, 1974: 9). Consequently Hobhouse devoted a great deal of time to the study of the implications of the new biological evolutionary theory for social thought. Like Durkheim,

Hobhouse was keen to refute Spencer, whose political position was antithetical to his own. He followed Spencer only to the extent that he believed that social evolution, in its later stages at least, was the result of human effort, thus substituting a more Lamarckian evolutionism for Darwinian theory. But the particular form of effort, he believed, was mental or intellectual effort. It was the development of *mind* which was of fundamental importance in the evolution of humanity. Once mind became self conscious it became an increasingly important factor in evolution - more important than competition or selection. Given the intellectual context in which he worked, it would have been impossible to attempt to refute Darwin's theory wholesale. Hobhouse got around this by agreeing that the survival of the fittest (in Spencer's terminology) was a fundamental evolutionary principle, but questioning the concept of 'fitness'. If fitness was to be defined in terms of adaptation to the environment, then it was necessary to be specific about what sort of environment people inhabited.

Environment, for Hobhouse, was 'the society of other men', and the 'fittest' was the person who was best adapted for social life. Who was this well adapted person?, asked Hobhouse, in his earliest work,

> Is he the bold unscrupulous man of force, the exacting, the merciless, the ungenerous?. . . Or is he the merciful and generous man of justice, whose hardest fights are fought for others' lives, and would rather, with Plato, suffer wrong than inflict it, and who will lay down his life to serve mankind? (Hobhouse, 1893: 91)

Hobhouse concluded that the second type of man

> ...'is fittest morally to survive in a society of mutually dependent human beings. And that the morally fittest should actually survive and prosper is the object of good social institutions.'

By this clever sleight of hand, Hobhouse achieved the same effect as Durkheim, making moral criteria the criteria for social evolution, without refuting Darwin's theory. What made human beings fit to survive, once 'mind' had become self-conscious, was their perfect adaptation to a social and cultural environment (rather than a 'natural' or physical one). A 'progressive' social environment involved organisation, which

depended on rationality and co-operation, rather than on sheer competition and aggression.

Like Geddes, Hobhouse had worked out the main lines of his sociology before 1904. In *Mind in Evolution*, published in 1901, he took as his axiom the statement that 'the highest thing that man knows is Mind, or Soul, or Spirit'. He then introduced the (borrowed) idea of 'Orthogenic Evolution' to refer to evolution that tends towards the growth of mind, distinguishing this from Doliogenic Evolution - which was evolution in any other direction (1901: 5).

Hobhouse offered an extended discussion of the literature on animal psychology, based on his own experimental work with a variety of animals, including his dog, Jack, and his cat, Tim. He was attempting to show how, in certain circumstances, some animals can make a practical judgement that can be distinguished from merely instinctive behaviour - they can draw on 'personal experience' to perform a complex action, which is greater than mere instinct or imitation. On the basis of this he claimed that the characteristic feature of the operation of mind was not peculiar to man and can be found to some extent in the 'higher' animals. This allowed him to construct a unilinear theory of evolution in which learned behaviour gradually takes over from instinct as the fundamental organising principle - the highest level of which is humanity, in which self-conscious intelligence is responsible for a greater part of behaviour. He developed his theory through an examination of the development of mind in human history. The theory had two central aspects. One was the notion of purpose (which developed as mind becomes self-conscious) and the other the notion of morality (because as mind became self-conscious, the thing that it became conscious of, above all, was the unity, 'oneness', or community of humanity, leading to the development of moral rules). Hobhouse was thus able to present the development of the social sciences in general, and sociology in particular, as the systematisation of the self consciousness of humanity, in the latest stage of 'orthogenic evolution', where humanitarianism (a guiding spirit, or spiritual principle which recognised the common humanity of all) had become a central guiding principle. In *Mind in Evolution*, sociology was presented as a

science, just like botany, a branch of scientific biology, because just as the botanist studies the development or evolution of plant species

> [so] does the sociologist with the human species: he treats it as something that has evolved and is evolving, and he seeks to discover what further developments it hold in germ. In this way, the study of growth, human evolution, is to the humanitarian spirit, what botany is to the gardener, who would not only bring the flowers that he has to the summit of their perfection, but would seek to derive from them new and more beautiful varieties.(1901: 351)

This is the essence of Hobhouse's early sociology. It involved both an acceptance of biological evolution, and a rejection of it. Darwin's theory was applicable to human evolution only until mind became self- conscious, after which social evolution became increasingly purposive, and the learned characteristics of sociability become advantageous for 'survival'. The fact that Hobhouse likened Sociology to Botany - as a science concerned with the nurture of humanity seems a propitious one. These were Geddes' sentiments exactly. Yet events would eventually conspire to make the two men wholeheartedly opposed to one another.

In the meantime, and in the absence of Hobhouse, Geddes' early presentation was generally well-received, though it was not without its critics.

The Reception of Civics in 1904

Apart from his single reference to Eugenics, the remainder of Geddes' first presentation at the Sociological Society outlined his method for the survey of cities, which involved geography and history, and the study of individual 'types', or a 'psychological survey'. He referred to his Valley Section and the geography of his native Scotland to plead for detailed study of people and places - region by region, from rural to urban social forms. Like a true evolutionist, Geddes spoke of how it was possible to find 'survivals' of the past in the city of the present. The geography of London, for example, showed evidence of its past as an agglomeration of villages (Geddes, 1905: 106). He likened the work of the historian of cities to the work of the geologist, who also studies successive layers, or strata, in time. Setting out a scheme of historical stages of

development from ancient societies (primitive, matriarchal, patriarchal) through recent (Greek and Roman, Mediaeval, Renaissance), to contemporary (Revolution, Empire, Finance) - he left question marks under the characteristics to be assigned to incipient developments (ibid: 109).

Although much of the material for the survey of cities was already available in 'parliamentary and municipal reports and returns, economic journals and the like', more works like those of Booth and Rowntree were also necessary. A social survey must gather information about the condition of the people, 'their occupations and real wages, their family budget and culture', their institutions, ideas and ideals (ibid: 116). A survey, moreover, must be local, rather than national, to enable realistic future planning to take place.

Geddes spoke too, in his presentation about the different classes or 'social formations' within the city - how each was a product of its historic, geographic and cultural *environment,* and how each contributed to the *functioning* of the whole in the present (ibid: 111-114) Again digressing from his prepared talk, Geddes admitted that his sociological method might seem alien to some among his audience, in particular to administrators (whose jobs were concerned with only one aspect of the total environment of cities), to those who thought only in terms of party politics, or to academics - whose work was essentially 'abstract'. He insisted, however, that detailed observations of the kind which a naturalist might make were the necessary groundwork for abstract theorising. Sociologists, trained to observe the evidence of social evolution in the city, might yet provide a much needed 'missing link' between the practical work of administrators and the abstract theorising of academics.

If, with hindsight, Geddes made a major mistake when he claimed eugenics as a complementary study to Civics, he was perhaps no less obviously at fault in his many references to Scotland's geography, and the town plan of Dunfermline. To his London audience, many of whom would have been ignorant of these particular landscapes, his references must have been singularly un-inspiring. Nor was his enthusiastic advocacy of foreign town planning at all fortunate - especially in his references to Germany, at a

time when nationalist jealousies were increasing rapidly, above all perhaps with respect to that particular country. Lastly, perhaps, to condemn academic sociologists for working in the 'abstract' was not likely to endear him to that portion of his audience engaged in such activities.

In spite of these mistakes, however, Geddes was received with more enthusiasm than his rival Galton had been only two months earlier. Among the discussants was Ebenezer Howard, who spoke enthusiastically about Geddes' paper, while simultaneously publicising his own project, the Garden Cities Association. Somewhat more astutely than Geddes, Howard managed to use nationalist sentiment to his own advantage:

> The programme which I have sketched out is certainly not too bold or comprehensive for the British Race. If a hundredth part of the organising skill which the Japanese and Russians are showing in the great war now in progress were shown by ourselves as citizens in our great civil war against disease and dirt, poverty and overcrowding, we could not only build many new cities on the best models, but could also bring our old towns into line with the new and better order.(121)

The most damning criticisms of Civics came from the historian and liberal M.P., J.M. Robertson.[10] Robertson had contributed in writing to the debate on Galton's paper, where he had suggested that the Eugenists' aims could not be achieved without addressing the political question of the 'bad physical and moral conditions set up by poverty'. Furthermore, he claimed, the rise and fall of nations depended more on both natural resources and political direction than on the rate of reproduction of the 'upper classes' (*Sociological Papers*, 1905: 73). In essence, Robertson's critique of Geddes was similar, in that he insisted that sociology, however defined, needed to address political questions. He believed that Geddes placed too much emphasis on the collection of detailed historical geographic and social data, and not enough on the political question of 'social method'. He was particularly scathing about Geddes'

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10 Robertson, during 1904, published a two volume collection of *Essays in Sociology* written during the last decade or so of the nineteenth century.

references to 'survivals' of the past in the present - declaring that it was reminiscent of Von Baer rather than Darwin.[11] For Robertson, the real sociological question was the political question of how to define 'progress', and, having defined it, how to achieve it. Let Geddes begin his next paper with a definition of 'progress', he declared, so that they might begin to squabble over that, rather than simply accumulating a mass of 'archaeological' detail.

> The problem of sociology arose on the general knowledge. I fear lest the work of sociology should run to an extension of this admirable study instead of to the stimulation of action taken on that particular knowledge, or on more general knowledge. We all knew there was plenty of poverty and how it was caused. We all had ideals as to how it was to be got rid in the future; but the question is: is the collection of detail or the prescription of social method the kind of activity that the Sociological Society is to take up?(*Sociological Papers*, 1905: 124)

Similarly, among the written comments on Geddes' paper was one which called for Sociology as Social Philosophy instead of as mere observation and collection of data (ibid.: 132).

In a somewhat different, but related, vein, other critics complained that Geddes had not elaborated the relationship between Civics and Citizenship - in terms of the *duties* of citizens rather than their rights (ibid: 124;133-134). The 'man in the street', according to this view, had to be made into a 'conscious citizen', before the civic idea could be properly developed.

Although these were not the only criticisms of Geddes raised by the discussants - they are the most consistent with a Hobhousian view of Sociology as the science of the systematisation of the self-consciousness of humanity, concerned not just with society as it is, but with how it should be; a sociology concerned with the moral

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11 Von Baer's theory was that 'ontogeny recapitulates phylogeny', suggesting that the development of the embryonic organism passes through successive stages which 'recapitulate' its evolutionary history (Mayr, 1990; Jones, 1980; Peel, 1971). Geddes' theory of social evolution, though more sophisticated biologically, in fact owed slightly more to Spencer, who had himself cited Von Baer and other German evolutionists in support of his own theory.

development of the citizen and the political means to this end. Ethics, in fact, did not make a major appearance at the Sociological Society until the following year.

Geddes' paper for 1904 does not highlight his earlier analyses, in which he had placed so much emphasis on the relations between organisms and their environment, via the transformation of matter and energy through 'function', though this approach is hinted at. This was to come, however, in his second presentation in 1905.

The Sociological Society, 1905

The Society heard the second part of Geddes' paper six months later in January of 1905. In it, he addressed his critics, and began to work out some of the themes of his earlier work. Without providing the definition of progress called for by Robertson, he insisted that both its causes, and the factors that prevent or reverse it, were to be found in any particular social formation - in the study of each occupational or 'social type', in any particular region, and their historical action and reaction, combination, transformation, or subjugation of other 'types'. Region and occupation (environment and function) were therefore fundamental to any sociological study of race, community, institutions, customs, laws, language or literature (Geddes, 1906: 60). Yes, said Geddes, this was geographical determinism, after Le Play - and no, it would not appeal to everyone - but he hoped to present his point of view in such a way that *environmental determinism could be combined with psychological and ethical theories which insisted upon human claims to 'free-will'* (ibid: 65). Geddes' train of thought *was* complex, but must have appeared to be *more complex* than it really was, because he was attempting to outline both theory and method at once.

His method was comparative, involving the tabular representation of data, similar to his earlier tables but at once much simplified and more complex, in that each table was to carry *more* information. These were his notorious 'thinking machines'.[12]

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12 Geddes' most famous 'thinking machine', the nine squared diagram in which place-work-folk was the focus, forms the top left-hand corner of the much bigger 36 squared Mapping of Life (Figure 3, inside back cover).

They were intended to express simultaneously the whole variety of different relationships between people, and between people and places and people and their occupations, as well as the way in which different schools of thought and social institutions arose from different relationships. Geddes felt that it was important for sociologists to be able to grasp all this - in overview, at a glance, because it was all part of what went to make up the social world, so that his diagrammatic representations were in some sense essential to his theoretical perspective. Unfortunately, few people were able to grasp the meaning of the machines themselves.

His theoretical point was that thought (consciousness) arose and developed in a particular existential context. In Geddes own words: 'from the everyday world of action there arises a corresponding thought world' (ibid: 68).

> The types of people, their kinds and style of work, their whole environment, all become represented in the mind of the community, and these react upon the individuals, their activities, their place itself (ibid: 72).

Geddes' presentation became more and more tortuous as he tried to explain his view that culture - ideas, beliefs, values, religion, and the entire stock of scientific knowledge was the outcome of social life in continuous interaction with environment. Environment determines organisms and occupations, which in turn modify environment, which again acts back on organisms and their occupations, culture and relations with each other. What he was attempting to say was that humans were both determined, *and* had free-will. We are both product and producers of our surroundings. He reiterated briefly his own view of economics as the study of real wealth - 'the results of industry on the concrete environment. . . its deterioration or progress', and suggested that once all this was understood, sociologists would understand the need to pay attention to the total natural, built and cultural environment.

> Civic improvers will find their ideals more realisable as they recognise the complex unity of the city as a social development of which all the departments of action and thought are in organic relation, be it of health

> or disease. The view of theoretic civics as concrete sociology may be more simply expressed as the co-adjustment of social survey and social service, now becoming recognised as rational . . . (Geddes, 1906: 80)

Geddes went on at some length about the way in which various aspects of thought developed, and how they became hardened into 'schools'. Formal education systems represented the passing down of history, morals, habit and custom, which thereby became fixed and resistant to change. It was this 'continual fixation' of social conventions which accounted for the 'general lapse of appreciation of environment' (ibid.). What was needed, Geddes suggested, was a new department of knowledge, the purpose of which was to study and criticise existent forms of law, morality and custom, and develop, on the basis of this, new ideas, theory and ideals for the evolution and amelioration of city life. He referred to this new department as 'Cloister', though what he had in mind was actually a university. Probably, he wanted to distance his ideas about the development of new knowledge from the universities of the day, which he saw (not without justification) to be compartmentalised, stuffy and resistant to change.

The paper was a long one, and it may be that as a result the time for discussion was short. Perhaps, also, it was too complex, and Geddes' use of diagrammatic representations had left his audience behind, as the Chairman, Charles Booth, indicated somewhat obliquely (*Sociological Papers*, 1906: 112-113). At least one of those contributing to the discussion, though, had managed to extract the heart of the paper, which was the essential truth and utility of Geddes' two 'seemingly contradictory doctrines that the individual is the product of the city and also that the city is the product of the citizen' (ibid: 114).

Was this seemingly straightforward proposition too much for his audience? For contemporary sociologists - most of whom are familiar with Marx's proposition that 'men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they make it under circumstances existing already' (or with another sociological rendering of the same thing) - to say that we are both products and producers of our social life is not

problematic. At that time, however, the very need for a 'science' of society was understood to rest on only one side of the proposition being true - that 'men' *can and do make their own history*, and the question then became, how, and in what direction, should history be made? The Eugenists' answer to this question was about to be clarified.

At Galton's second presentation[13] support for Eugenics, which had been received with considerable reserve by the discussants at the previous meeting, appeared to have increased substantially. Galton argued that just as polygamous marriages in some parts of the world were sanctioned on the basis of 'social well-being', so might be strict limitations on the freedom of marriage (Galton, 1906a: 5). At the same meeting, Galton publicised a 'suitable list of subjects for eugenic enquiry', which concluded with the recommendation that an authority might be established at some time in the future to issue 'Eugenic certificates' to those in possession of 'a more than average share of. . . goodness of constitution, of physique, and of mental capacity' (Galton, 1906b: 17). Neither Geddes (or Branford, who also spoke for Civics), nor Hobhouse appear to have been present at the meeting, nor to have found it desirable or necessary to make any comment on these propositions. Yet verbal contributions from the anthropologist A.C. Haddon, the pathologist F. Mott, A.E. Crawley, and Edward Westermarck, who was in the chair, were generally approving, as were written contributions from the French biologist Yves Delage, and the Italian Professors Posada (Constitutional Law), and Sergi (Anthropology), and others, including Bertrand Russell and Ferdinand Tonnies.

Ethical sociology - whose solution to the making of history was different from that of the eugenists, made its first major appearance in this second volume of *Sociological Papers*. Hobhouse chaired the session at which the Danish philosopher, Professor Harald Höffding read his paper 'On the Relation between sociology and

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13 Galton's paper was entitled 'Restrictions in Marriage'. Was there some irony in the title of this paper, offered on this particular date - Valentine's day?

Ethics'. The argument was that sociology and ethics were separate, though intimately connected, subjects. Ethics could form part of the subject matter of sociology, to the extent that 'ethical ideals and ethical endeavours' were factors in social development. On the other hand the science of ethics was dependent on sociology because what was ethically right had to be sociologically possible. However, according to Höffding, the 'character and direction of ethical life' was very often, at the present moment, determined by either 'physiological or social heredity' (Höffding, 1906: 178) - in other words, by genetic inheritance or environment. Eventually a scientific ethics - based on sociological knowledge - will become a social art, by showing which ends should be valued as appropriate to the highest development of society. This position was entirely consonant with that outlined by Geddes in an early paper (Geddes, 1881: 28-30). Moreover, Hobhouse, in the chair, agreed. But Westermarck, in the discussion which ensued, put his finger on the main difficulty with this point of view when he said he believed sociology to be a science, and

> that ethics, as a science, can only be the study of the moral consciousness as a fact. Normative ethics, which lays down rules for conduct, is not a science. The aim of every science is to discover some truth, and an ethical norm can be neither true nor false.(192)

Now, Hobhouse had his own system of 'ethical norms' which he wished to promote as truth, and Westermarck's comment, coming as it did from one who espoused social Darwinist values, may well have annoyed him. He had embarked early on his particular project, in which he used sociology to ground, epistemologically, a particular set of ('New' Liberal) values, in direct refutation of Spencer's social darwinism and old Liberal values, (Collini, 1979: 172). Of course, in this attempt to create a scientific basis for morality, he was no different from many of his contemporaries, but the fact that he was more successful than others was bound up with the institutionalisation of New Liberal values politically, as well as in the status of the university system generally, and the particular events surrounding sociology's institutionalisation at LSE.

The Sociological Society, 1906

If, during the course of the preceding year, both Hobhouse and Geddes had found it expedient to ignore Galton, this must have become more difficult between the concluding months of 1905 and the beginning of 1906. The third volume of *Sociological Papers* (published in 1907) contains papers on the 'Biological Foundations of Sociology' (read on October 24th, 1905), by Galton's supporter Archdall Reid; on 'The Study of Individuals (Individuology) and Their Natural Groupings (Sociology)' by Lionel Tayler, read on November 23rd, 1905; and another on 'A Practicable Eugenic Suggestion', read by W. McDougall on February 21st, 1906. All three papers promote Eugenics, in one way or another. With the discussions and written comments on their content they absorb 150 of a total of 377 pages, leaving proportionally less space for the other eight papers.

Archdall Reid's paper argued that an adverse environment was a necessary prerequisite for eugenic improvement. An appearance of eugenic improvement could be achieved through improving the environment - but this would be merely transient and superficial, restricted to acquired characteristics. Unless the genetically unfit were weeded out in a harsh environment, the overall quality of the race, in spite of appearances to the contrary, would decline (Reid, 1907: 3-27). This argument, to which neither Geddes nor Hobhouse responded, denied the utility of what both believed to be necessary - the improvement of the environment (though, of course, for Geddes this was the natural, and built as well as cultural environment, where for Hobhouse it was conceived merely as 'social' or cultural environment).

McDougall's paper distinguished between positive and negative eugenics - where the former involved getting those of greater than average '*civic worth*' to produce a greater proportion of the next generation, and the latter in preventing the unfit from reproducing at all. He suggested, quite simply, that in order to get people of greater than average '*civic worth*' to have more children, they should be paid on a sliding scale according to the number of children they produced (McDougall, 1907:

58). These constant references to civic worth seem to suggest that McDougall was attempting to create an alliance between eugenics and the civic sociology of Geddes.

Tayler wanted to suggest that sociology should be based on the study of individuals. He argued that individuals cannot be modified by their environments, but have evolved nevertheless, and deduced from this that evolution had occurred as a result of humanity's superior mental capacities. 'Man is not, therefore, a modified but a modifying element in world surroundings'.

> . . .what force is it that checks social development? Not climate, for advanced civilisations are . . . scattered nearly all over the world. Not geographical nor geo-political position, for world empires have developed and decayed in the most diverse situations . . . . Not buildings, for these can be pulled down and erected afresh. What checks one man from developing, and many men, is the opposition of other men; and this opposition of massed-man to individual-man, and of massed man to nature is a growing force in world life. How men and women tend to group themselves into sociological units, and how these complex units behave in relation to each other, and influence the nation or empire to which they belong, is, therefore, the major problem of the sociologist, to which other minor geographical, commercial, and political studies will have to be related (Tayler, 1907: 111-112).

In making individual mental capacity the 'motor' of evolution, Tayler was constructing an argument which closely followed Hobhouse's own. Social development would best be served, Tayler argued, by creating equality of opportunity in society (ibid: 114), because it was the *human environment* rather than the animal, vegetable or inanimate surroundings of the individual, that had caused evolution. The best means to improve the quality of the individual members of society would be

> The persistent attempt to raise the whole social condition of the nation or state to a more human level; and this necessitates a continuous hygienic reform in the surroundings - increased educational opportunities for, and increased vigilance against anti-social action on the part of the lowermost strata of society. By this means an increasingly keen competitive mental struggle will be fostered by the desire of the best members of the lower strata to displace the worst of the higher . . . . Selective influences will not, as it has been claimed, be checked; but their character will be changed, a mental selective test rather than a physical barbaric one being imposed. The lower types of human beings, rather than the higher, would thus tend to be eliminated -

> by diseases resulting from failure in life, by results of their own brute excesses, by imprisonment, retention in asylums, inability to marry and support a family, and other causes. *A natural unconscious environmental eugenic selection* would thus be established. . . (ibid: 119-120).

Tayler's paper illustrates the capacity of Eugenics to change the colour of its coat. There can be little doubt that this was a pro-eugenic argument, and although the 'social method' it prescribed was more in tune with that of the ethical (and civics) sociologists, it contained a very different idea of what was 'ethically' right. Like Hobhouse, Tayler made 'mind' the important evolutionary factor, and like Hobhouse too, the important part of the environment was the living, social environment. Simultaneously, Tayler argued that 'natural' and 'built' environmental factors had been a weak and 'passive', rather than an active factor in evolution, and that sociology ought to begin from the study of individuals themselves, rather than from the study of their surroundings. He argued, without mentioning Geddes, or any of his supporters by name, that this sort of sociology would be of little use. By a theoretical twist just as clever as that made by either Hobhouse or Durkheim, therefore, Tayler had managed to hi-jack the theory of evolution by natural selection, to argue that a political programme of improvement of the social environment by creating equality of opportunity would have the 'eugenic' result of improving the stock of the nation and weeding out the 'unfit'. Possibly Tayler's argument was intended as a panacea for the Sociological Society's theoretical ills, yet it does not take too much imagination to realise that Hobhouse must have found this as difficult to accept as he would to refute. Perhaps in consequence, he made no comment.

Shortly afterwards, on 14th March 1906, Geddes' collaborator J. Arthur Thomson gave a paper on 'The Sociological Appeal to Biology', in which he categorically denied that eugenics *per se*, as the science of so-called 'good-breeding' was of any use to sociology. He argued that although there were good grounds for sociology to be based on biology, societies were more than the sum of their individual biological parts, so that a sociology that concentrated merely on breeding, therefore,

might result in socially adverse consequences (Thomson, 1907: 158-60). The uses of biology for sociology were that 1) biological study could bring into relief what was distinctively social, 2) that biology might show that certain features of social life had 'organismal mainsprings', and 3) biological conclusions and experiences might be generally suggestive for sociology (ibid: 161-2).

Accordingly, Thomson went on to speak about inherited variation and acquired modifications, and to suggest that 'social organisation provides a means - an external heritage - whereby the results of modifications may be practically transmissible, though not organically entailed' (ibid: 163). He also suggested that 'man is a slowly varying organism, and he is peculiarly liable to have his inborn nature concealed by a veneer due to nurture'. Biology could help sift out what was 'natural' in heredity, to leave a clearer idea of what was entailed in 'social' heredity. Thomson discussed eugenics in considerable and impartial detail, coming to the general conclusion that although many of the issues raised by population questions and eugenics were important, 'our sentiments of solidarity and sympathy are too precious and too strong to admit of *much* social surgery or of the more thoroughgoing methods of reproduction elimination, which moreover assume the possession of more science than we really possess (ibid: 179). This paper, in which Thomson also proposes both that struggle for existence may be 'a gentle endeavour after well-being' prompted by 'love', and essentially 'other regarding' (ibid: 175), *and* that militarism may actually be counterproductive in an evolutionary sense, since the 'best' physical specimens get wiped out (ibid: 180-2), amounts *to no less than a refutation of the supposed alliance between Civics and any but the most innocuous form of Eugenics.*

Thus, before the end of 1906, the initial, precariously 'unified' position of 1904 - which had seen Geddes supposedly aligning his Civics school with Eugenics, while Branford aligned it with the Durkheimians, and where Ethical Sociology was a latent, rather than a manifest, third alternative - had altered quite drastically. The Eugenists, by trumpeting about the necessity of breeding on the basis of 'civic worth', were clearly ready to align themselves with the Civics school. The latter, however, had begun to

draw back from whatever agreement they had had with the Eugenists initially, while Tayler's article illustrates quite dramatically how even New Liberal policy - such as equality of opportunity, and reform of the social environment, could be justified by an appeal to Eugenics. Tayler recommended 'nurture' on the grounds that it would ultimately improve 'nature'. In doing so, he collapsed what amounted to a crucially important political distinction between social reform, social engineering and eugenics - and where both Geddes and Hobhouse were in different senses advocates of the first two, neither of them wished to be associated with the latter.

1907 - 1911: Divergence and Dispute

Hobhouse does not appear to have attended any of the Society's meetings between late May 1905 and the end of 1906. There is no evidence that he contributed either verbally or in writing to the discussions, although he was still chairman of the Editorial Committee. It is likely that his time was largely taken up with his *Tribune* work, and with the writing of *Morals in Evolution,* published in 1906. Even so, as Chairman of the Editorial Committee, Hobhouse must have been aware of what was going on. It is highly unlikely that he approved. Yet his was a difficult position. With many Eugenists (perhaps most especially Galton), Hobhouse believed in the importance of intellectual development for the future of humanity. He also believed that 'evolution' could be politically managed, to produce 'progress'. But he denied that Darwinian natural selection was important beyond a certain point in human evolution, and he did not believe that the way to produce progress was by selective breeding of the sort proposed by the Eugenists.

The general theme of *Morals in Evolution* was the study of the evolution of 'ethics', defined as the regulation of life. Based on an comparative historical study of systems of morality and ethics, and encompassing the history of philosophy, Hobhouse theorised the gradual release of ethical behaviour from inherited psycho-physical structures, as mind became the dominant factor in human evolution. Ultimately, ethical regulation would expand from a concern with family, to community and society, to an

ethical system which envisaged humanity as a whole, and was concerned with the maintenance of the common good. This theory, Hobhouse suggested, based as it was in human history, was not dependent on biological theories of evolution, and would stand up even if the biological theories fell. On one interpretation, then, *Morals in Evolution* can be read as a sustained, and well-researched 'scientific' onslaught on Eugenics (Abrams, 1985:193).[14]

Thus, the Sociological Society had lost all traces of theoretical 'unity', well before the end of 1906.[15] In 1907 the *Sociological Papers* were abandoned. The Eugenists hived off to form, first, a separate committee within the Society, and afterwards their own organisation, The Eugenics Education Society. Hobhouse, during August of this year, had been offered, and, in September, accepted the Martin White Chair at the LSE - a Chair which both Branford and Martin White had hoped would be offered to Geddes. Finally, at the tail end of 1907, the Civics sociologists formed a separate Cities Committee within the Society. By 1908 there was a new journal - the *Sociological Review*, with the editorial committee replaced by Hobhouse as sole editor. This, in combination with his position as Martin White Professor of Sociology at the LSE, put him in an unparalleled position of power with respect to the future definition and development of sociology.

The Issue of the Martin White Chair

Why was Geddes not given the chair? Branford (1929: 275) recorded that a total of four applicants (including Westermarck?) had tried out for the Chair by presenting a formal lecture at LSE. Surely if Martin White had really meant Geddes to have it he might have strongly recommended, as Galton would later do at the University of

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14 Abrams believed that all of Hobhouse's writings were addressed to 'the business of unmasking the Policy-science ambitions of Spencer, Galton and the Eugenicists and Social-Biologists who followed them' (1985: 193)

15 As Abrams put it, 'the nature and province of the emergent discipline were the heart of the problem' (1985: 4).

London for Pearson, that he was to be its first occupant? Yet Geddes failed to be appointed.

There are several possible explanations. One is simply that those in control of the LSE would simply not allow it. The school was the brain-child of Sidney Webb, who was chairman of governors between 1901 and 1911, and who took a personal and controlling interest in every appointment (Dahrendorf, 1995). There is little evidence that the Webbs knew Geddes at all well, though Beatrice recorded in her diary for October 1890, one 'delightful afternoon' with Geddes (Webb, 1982). He was not, however, among the chosen circle of close friends and colleagues whom they cultivated at their home in Grosvenor Road, but was an outsider as far as this London élite was concerned. As a Scot, in fact, he was almost as much a foreigner, to those for whom London was the world in microcosm as the (Swedish) Finn, Westermarck. Moreover, Geddes had on at least one occasion lectured on the subject 'What's Wrong With H.G. Wells?', which may not have endeared him to Wells's friends, Beatrice and Sidney (Webb, 1983; Boardman, 1978: 209). Another of their friends, G.B. Shaw, apparently loathed him (Boardman, 1978: 210). Hobhouse on the contrary, had paid his dues by getting along famously with Sidney Webb, *almost* becoming a member of the Fabian Society, recruiting for the Fabians, as well as being for a while among the much favoured habitués of Grosvenor Road (Collini, 1979; Hobson and Ginsberg, 1931; Webb, 1983). And although by 1904 he had parted company with the Webbs, politically speaking, he remained, when all was said and done, a relative of Beatrice's (even if only by marriage) (Webb,1983, 1984).

Another influential figure at LSE was its principal between 1903 and 1908, geographer Halford Mackinder.[16] He and Geddes had each attempted to set up a

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16 Dahrendorf's 1995 history of the LSE records that it was Mackinder who persuaded Martin White to fund a Chair in Sociology, and is therefore largely responsible, with Martin White, for the institutionalisation of Sociology (1995: 94). Fincham (1975: 27-8) suggests that *Geddes*, initially, put Martin White in touch with Dr. Roberts, who was registrar of the Board for the extension of University Teaching at the University of London. (note continued overleaf)

Geographical Institute, the former at Oxford, the latter in Edinburgh. Mackinder succeeded where Geddes failed, even though each had a similar conception of the role of the region in geography (Meller, 1990). Geddes, however, was both internationalist and pacifist in the face of Mackinder's Liberal Imperialist stance (which suggested that Britain could retain her industrial greatness by consolidating her empire) - and Mackinder may have felt threatened by this opposition (Meller, 1990: 129-38). Hobhouse, of course, was similarly opposed to war and imperialism, but he defined his subject differently from Geddes. Sociology, for Hobhouse, did not include geography. And then, of course, both Hobhouse and Mackinder were part of the same political-social circle that clustered around the Webbs (Dahrendorf, 1995).

Politics, in fact, is likely to have been a major reason for Hobhouse's appointment. Not only was Hobhouse at the centre of the London scene, via his political journalism, academic publications, and LSE teaching,[17] he was also on the 'winning' side, politically. As Dahrendorf records in his history of LSE, in a political climate in which old ideologies and parties were dissolving, new ones emerging, and in which all were competing for dominance, LSE was *the* place to be (1995: 25-47). It was an exciting time to be a 'New' liberal, as Hobhouse was, and although there is no sense in which LSE can be said to have been founded as a Liberal institution - at the beginning, the Webbs were concerned above all with 'efficiency', and part of the raison d'être of the school was just this, a formal training in efficiency for future administrators - the political climate and Hobhouse's open espousal of New Liberal theory constitute good reasons for the belief that Hobhouse's appointment to the Chair was strongly bound up with the rise of New Liberalism.

Since Geddes was a fervent supporter of University Extension, this seems likely. Overall, it is likely that Geddes, Branford and Martin White, who was 'disappointed' that Geddes did not get the Chair (Dahrendorf, 1995), did more to get sociology into the university than Mackinder.

17 Geddes, meanwhile, was still bound by the conditions of his Chair at Dundee, and the need to earn a living, to spend at least part of his year in his native Scotland, and still lived with his family in Edinburgh.

Other reasons for Geddes' failure to get the Martin White chair include the possibility that he did not, in fact, really want it, or try very hard to get it (Meller, 1990). Part of the evidence for this is that recorded by Geddes' son Arthur, according to whom Geddes had rushed down to London on the train, and had little or no time to prepare his lecture. Consequently, he gave one of his spontaneous and 'scrambled' talks (Boardman, 1978: 231). In addition, unlike Hobhouse, whose Oxford education was the very model of high status respectability, Geddes not only had no formal academic qualifications, but had an extremely disrespectful and critical attitude toward the university system with its over-formalised curriculum and specialised departments. A more devious or career-oriented man might have dissembled a little, but Geddes was openly and sarcastically critical. It is unlikely that this worked in his favour. But Hobhouse had contributed in no small measure to the design of the first sociology syllabus, thereby ensuring that his own particular interests were (coincidentally?) well-represented on the syllabus, and it is likely that his trial lecture was addressed to the subject matter it covered. Geddes had also given lectures at LSE, but these seem to have been in association with the University Extension Movement, rather than as courses for the (BSc) degree in Economics (Fincham, 1975). There is also the possibility that the rising tide of nationalism, which in combination with a jealous desire for administrative efficiency (of governments) seeped into LSE up to 1911 (Searle, 1971: 54-63, 124-5), was a factor in Geddes' failure. Certainly, sociology, after its international beginnings, became increasingly nationalistic in the period up to the second World War (Maus, 1962: vii). Neither Geddes, as a Scot, nor the Finn, Westermarck, were ever able to play a major role.

Whatever the truth of the matter, Geddes' failure to be appointed left Hobhouse, at the end of 1907, in a position of pivotal importance for the development of sociology in Britain. As the sole full-time Professor at LSE, he was perfectly placed to define and shape the scope and direction of the subject. He agreed to become editor of the *Sociological Review* in 1908 only on the condition that he was given the same 'unconditional editorial control' that Branford had enjoyed over the *Sociological*

Papers (Branford, 1929: 276). He was able to dictate, therefore, both academic and extra-academic sociological activity.

The Issue of Geddes' Exclusion

It is unlikely that Hobhouse's appointment to the Chair was at the root of subsequent events, although it must have been a contributory factor. The earlier debates at the Sociological Society had already set the tone. The jury was still undecided on the issue of the definition of sociology. Some - Galton, Pearson, Archdall Reid - wanted to claim it as purely eugenic; others that it could be a synthetic discipline, based on biology but encompassing psychology, ethics and, above all, environment (Geddes, Branford). Harald Höffding had argued for sociology as a subject in which the study of actually existing moral values was combined with a 'scientific ethics', a definition close to that of Hobhouse himself. Attempts had been made, during the course of 1906, to create a series of alliances between the different viewpoints, none of which met with a generalised approval. Hobhouse's appointment to the Martin White Chair, combined with his editorial control at the *Sociological Review*, gave him a degree of control over the development of the discipline that no single member of the Society had previously enjoyed.

Once enthroned as the official head of the new discipline, Hobhouse began to exercise his editorial prerogative in a somewhat heavy-handed manner. The *Sociological Papers* had published every paper presented at the meetings of the Sociological Society between 1904 and 1906, complete with the discussions which followed, as a matter of course. When it became the *Sociological Review* under Hobhouse's sole editorship, presentation ceased to go hand in hand with publication. The very first volume of the *Review* (1908) gave no indication of which of its articles had been given as papers, and 'discussions' had been separated from articles. A book review section had been added, which must have been intended to bring the journal into line with other (foreign) journals of sociology. In a marked change of policy from his earlier non-contributory role, Hobhouse published one of his own papers in this

issue (Hobhouse, 1908b). And Eugenics, which had seemingly threatened to absorb the *Sociological Papers* in 1906, had all but vanished from the *Review*. Moreover, either sociologists in general had been quick to jump on the Hobhousian bandwagon, following the publication of *Morals in Evolution* and his appointment to the Chair, or Hobhouse himself had exercised a considerable editorial discretion in publishing articles that followed his own views quite closely. An article on 'Herd Instinct and its Bearing on the Psychology of Civilised Man' (Trotter, 1908) attempted to show how the social or gregarious nature of humanity was the result of 'natural selection'. Trotter theorised that group membership had significant survival advantages, managing to incorporate a somewhat sarcastic dig at the Eugenists *en route*, by suggesting that their membership of that particular herd heightened their susceptibility to false science (Trotter, 1908: 247). Another article suggested that the problem of national degeneration was not likely to be biologically caused, but rather more likely to be political in origin (Sorley, 1908: 321-9).

Hobhouse's editorial acknowledged the theoretical disarray into which the society had so obviously fallen by the end of 1906, when he wrote of the 'deep divergences of view as to the nature and province of the enquiries' which sociologists 'professedly pursue in common' (Hobhouse, 1908a: 1). Indirectly, he attacked Wells, for his suggestion, at a meeting of 1906, that sociology could not be scientific (Wells, 1906), and went on to suggest that, in view of the 'divergence in the handling of sociological investigations' his editorial role ought to involve some indication of sociology's scope. General Sociology, as he defined it, led directly from the political philosophy of Green, Mill, Bentham, Rousseau and Locke to a consideration of ethical problems. He implied, rather than stated outright, that sociology and biology were two distinct areas of study, by defining the latter as the study of 'Life', and the former as the study of 'Society'. Of all the different areas of study that went to make up sociology, and the practical investigations involved, Hobhouse suggested that their contribution would be touched on in the journal at the point where it overlapped with 'General Sociology'.

> It does not lie within our province to cater for the investigation of the recognised specialist. We invite him rather to discuss his principles and broad results with representatives of other specialisms and in the presence of those interested in sociology at large. (Hobhouse, 1908a: 10)

Is this statement aimed directly at Geddes, or at the adherents of Civics sociology in general? Were the 'recognised specialists' those who had recently organised a separate Cities Committee with the Society? If so, Hobhouse had certainly put them firmly in their place! Yet there is no evidence that Geddes had been excluded during 1908. His paper on 'Chelsea, Past and Possible' appeared, as did a 'discussion' of Civics and Citizenship, which included an announcement of the formation of the Cities Committee within the Sociological Society (Geddes, 1908a; 1908b).

Yet Branford (still Honorary Secretary) and other members of the council of the Society must have been unhappy with at least some aspects of the new journal. At the tail end of 1908, Branford, in a letter to Martin White, complained that Hobhouse admitted that he did not really understand Civics, but 'as an editor he refuses to be guided and it is in his nature to continue in that independent line' (Branford, 1908, cited in Halliday, 1968: 388).

There is evidence to suggest that the division grew wider in the ensuing year. Until at least the end of 1906, all the Society's meetings had been held at LSE. By the end of 1909, it had moved its offices to Buckingham Street. But although this was not really all that far from LSE, an announcement appeared in the *Review* to the effect that in future its meetings would take place at a neighbouring lecture hall, perhaps indicating a determination to separate the Society from academic Sociology. In his Presidential address to the Society at the beginning of 1909, Edward Brabrook had stated that the *Review* would continue to 'comprise a record of the papers read before the Society', which might have been taken to mean that they would continue to be published in full. It quickly became evident, however, that they *would not*. The Society was reduced to publishing short abstracts of papers as 'proceedings'. (Brabrook, 1909: 185; Proceedings, 1909: 316).

It is possible to justify Hobhouse's behaviour to some extent, of course, by reminding ourselves that it was his duty and responsibility, as (almost) the sole representative of British Sociology in an academic post, to attempt to raise the level of sociological debate and the quality of published work. Against this, however, it might be that Hobhouse went beyond his remit, in attempting to exclude as far as possible ideas that were opposed to his own, and even, perhaps, ideas that were sufficiently close to his own to pose a threat to his status as the lone representative of 'British' sociological theory.

The final blow was dealt early in 1910, when a paper presented by Geddes, on 'City Surveys and City Reports' failed to be published in the *Review*, while presentations by Sybella Guerney, Laurence Gomme, and Professor Caldecott were all published, and one by Ratcliffe gained a promise that it would 'probably be published in the April number' (although, in the event, it never was). Geddes got no such promise (Proceedings of the Sociological Society, 1910, January: 94-5). This was a direct snub, and for Geddes' supporters in the Society, particularly Branford (who continued to take an active role), it must have been too much to ignore. We are left to imagine the unholy row which followed. Hobhouse's resignation as editor of the *Review* was announced soon afterwards in July (*Sociological Review*, 1910, No. 3, July: 226). According to Hobhouse's biographers, this was 'partly from pressure of other work, but partly also from a divergence of view as to the conduct and contents of such a review that had arisen between him and other active supporters of the society' (Hobson & Ginsberg, 1931: 46).

Did Hobhouse *really* fail to understand Civics? Or did he identify Civics with Eugenics, as Meller has suggested? Did he have no other option but to exclude a sociology in which the concrete, material environment, built or natural, was seen to play a major role in shaping human consciousness and action? Or was there, as Branford had suggested, something in his nature which ensured that he could not compromise or collaborate with Geddes?

To explain Geddes' exclusion by suggesting that he did not understand Civics is somewhat insulting to Hobhouse, even if this was the explanation he chose to give Branford. It is certainly true that Geddes' position was difficult to understand and was not expressed in a manner which aided comprehension. Yet Hobhouse was an intellectual of much more than average stature. It is only necessary to examine a work of the quality of *Morals in Evolution* to realise that Hobhouse had not only the ability to understand, but also *to make use of* aspects of Geddes' work in his own. Yet he did not.

To explain Geddes' exclusion by suggesting that Hobhouse believed it too close to Eugenics will not quite do either, though this certainly had a great deal to do with the general nature of the early part of the dispute. After announcing his resignation, Hobhouse continued in his editorial role at the *Review* until the beginning of 1911, when the journalist and lecturer S.K. Ratcliffe - a supporter of Geddes, was appointed acting editor (Report, 1911: 176; Boardman, 1978). At the end of the Society's Annual General Meeting (A.G.M.) in 1911, held on 21st March, Hobhouse 'delivered, before a large audience, an address on 'Eugenics and Sociology' (Proceedings, 1911: 180). The paper itself was never published, though it is highly likely that its text was close to that of another lecture on 'The Value and Limitations of Eugenics' delivered in America in April the same year, which also appears both in the *Review* (Hobhouse, 1911a: 281-302), and as a chapter in Hobhouse's (1911b) *Social Evolution and Political Theory.*

If the contours of the dispute are understood to revolve around Hobhouse's conviction that Geddes was a supporter of Eugenics, this paper reads *as an attempt at rapprochement on Hobhouse's part.* Hobhouse remains cautious about the value of Eugenics, though he agrees that the 'feeble-minded' ought not to be allowed to breed (Hobhouse, 1911a: 282-3). He goes on, however, to agree with Thomson (and thus, by implication with Geddes) that environment can and does have an effect on the life of the organism and possibly also on its off-spring, by means of poor nutrition, or the entry of toxic substances into the body, which then affect the 'germ-plasm' (ibid: 295)

> We should certainly be risking a good deal if, in the present stage of our biological awareness, we were to proceed on the assumption that no degree of unhealthiness in the conditions of life would have any permanent tendency to deterioration, and here, from the sociological point of view, the affect upon the mother would be just as important as the effect upon the germ-plasm. . . . on the practical side the indirect influences upon the unborn child are just as important as the influences on the germinal cells which go to constitute the child. It must be added that all careful students of heredity admit the plenitude of our ignorance as to variation and that there are not wanting indications that the environment has indirect and subtle effects which have yet to be measured. (ibid: 296)

Sadly, the Society's Proceedings note only that 'an animated discussion' followed Hobhouse's lecture. Shortly after the A.G.M. at which this (or a similar) lecture was given, Branford announced his own resignation (Report of the Council for the Year 1910 (1911): 175). Was this his way of signalling that the dispute should now be allowed to drop?

It was not allowed to drop, however, though it may be that Branford, at least, managed to make his peace with Hobhouse. Certainly he found it within his powers to continue to work with Hobhouse, who remained on a re-formed Editorial Committee.[18] Perhaps, in keeping with the shrewdness of character attributed to him by Mumford (1948: 682-683), this was indicative of a continued belief in the possibility of collaboration between LSE sociology and the work of the Society - if only they could all get along together. In his obituary for Hobhouse, Branford would later note the many similarities between the two schools of thought, and plead once more for collaboration on the lines of the Durkheimian school (Branford, 1929). Hobhouse, however, never referred to Geddes or Geddes' work again, which suggests that there

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18 What were Hobhouse's motives for remaining on the Editorial Committee? In view of both the 'pressure of work' and the dispute, it would have been easier to understand if he had dropped the *Review* altogether. Perhaps he still hoped for a reconciliation with Geddes - but he made little attempt to bring this about. Or did he, perhaps, need to keep a finger in the pie of the *Review*, since it was, at the time, the only British sociological journal, and he the only full-time professor? Or could he, perhaps, not bring himself to sever all ties, on the basis that at least, on the committee, he would know what was going on at the society?

was more to the dispute than a disagreement over Eugenics. And although he was forced to acknowledge at least some of Geddes' contribution, obliquely, in *Social Development* (1966a [1924]: 104), he did so while attacking openly one of Geddes' early influences, the Le Playist Geographer, Eduard Demolins.

A Clash of Personalities?

At the same time Geddes clearly never forgave Hobhouse either, though whether this was a matter of sour grapes over his failure to get the chair, or the result of Hobhouse's continuing to ignore him even after acknowledging that he was at least partially right (or maybe even both), is hard to say. He vented his spleen both publicly in his writing (see, for example, Geddes, 1922), and privately - writing to his daughter Norah in 1931, in characteristically sarcastic tone, on the occasion of his Cities and Civics Exhibition moving from France to LSE. A room was being prepared, he told her

> to hang it today at school of economics. London's great College Temple of University Faculty of Divinity - next the city - where Mammon is God! . . . . I've seen inside Pilgrim's burden, in 'Progress' - and how stupid never to have realised its weight of Sins was weighted essentially in *Gold*! . . . . And what a quaint coincidence for my own Life Comedy - to be going today to the very place and type I have most abominated since I began economics with Ruskin nearly sixty years ago. (Geddes, 1931, cited in Boardman, 1978: 422)

Is there here some veiled reference to Hobhouse in particular as well as to the LSE as a whole? In any case, Geddes was doing his own dissembling when he claimed to have abominated both the School and its People since as early as 1884. Even if he had not wanted the Martin White chair for himself in 1907, there is no doubt that he wanted academic recognition for his work. Only months after Hobhouse's death he wrote to Branford urging him to get their colleague Alexander Farquharson 'in' at the LSE (Boardman, 1978: 410).

Was this, then, in the final analysis, a case of academic jealousy, a clash of personalities and social class? Of himself, Hobhouse wrote at one time that he was 'speculative by nature' and was 'always in danger of caring more for truth than for

doing good, e.g. for finding out what is the best reform to be carried than for the real effect on the happiness of the people that it will have when carried' (Hobhouse, cited in Collini, 1979: 58). On the other hand, he also wrote (to his fiancée) that 'I like talking to the village people. I understand them and feel *en rapport* with them. I feel friends with them and it always makes me feel happy' (ibid: 59). Perhaps, however, there was too keen a sense of the class differences between himself and the 'masses' for Hobhouse ever to have managed really to bring himself down to their level (ibid: 59fn; 80fn; 89fn; 93fn).

By others, Hobhouse has been described as a spoilt youngest child, who could be irritable and moody, and had a 'puritan' streak (Collini, 1979: 52-4, 89fn.). Like Weber, he was prone to periodic outbreaks of despondency, at which times his optimistic theoretical assessment of evolutionary trends would give way to pessimism about the state of contemporary politics (ibid: 90; 144; 168-170). Nor was he, it seems, a particularly sociable man, though his friend and biographer J.A. Hobson suggested that what appeared to some people as self-centredness, arrogance or aloofness was really the mark of a diffident shyness (Hobson and Ginsberg, 1931: 95). The most damning indictment of his personality, and the one that suggests most strongly that personality may have been a great part of the dispute, is that colleagues sometimes found him 'inconsiderate and not easy to work with' (ibid: 94). Collini suggests that this may have been due to the fact that 'there was a hint of paranoia in his readiness to perceive slights' (1979:94).

It is not too difficult to imagine that, when confronted with the outspoken, forthright Scot, Geddes, with his open lack of respect for the academy and all that it stood for, Hobhouse was too ready to read a personal insult into what was, essentially, a central part of Geddes' concern with social progress.[19] As Meller has noted (1990: 2,

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19 It may also have been a defensive reaction to his own lack of formal education. Ought Hobhouse, with his particular interest in 'mind', to have been more sensitive to psychological 'quirks' of this kind - both his own and those of others?

and above, Chapter 2), Geddes loved to demolish the arguments of others verbally. Yet apart from Hobhouse's committment to abstract, philosophic academic 'armchair' sociology, and his refusal to accept a role for the natural or physical environment, there were many points on which the two might have agreed. Perhaps, too, there was an element of both class superiority, and personal jealousy in Hobhouse's attitude to Geddes, who succeeded so well at doing what he himself would have liked to do, but couldn't quite manage - going out into the world beyond the confines of the academy and mixing with 'real' working people at their own level. Again, neither man was able to 'suffer fools gladly', and both could be domineering and dogmatic. Geddes badly wanted his ideas to be recognised, although he did himself no favours by his mode of exposition. His bitterness at Hobhouse's rejection of his ideas is amply reflected in the letter cited above.

Yet there are indications, too, that Geddes and Hobhouse might have got on with one another at a personal level, and been able to collaborate intellectually, had either been prepared to meet the other halfway. As early as *Democracy and Reaction* (1904), Hobhouse had written deploring the development of 'suburban villadom' and the absence of community and public life in the towns to which 'men resort only to dine and sleep, while the women have no visible function in life except to marry and discuss marriages' (1904: 68-9). Geddes was to spend a good part of his life in attempting to create just the sort of participatory community that Hobhouse supposedly desired. It may be that Geddes' methods of active involvement in civic improvement were anathema to Hobhouse, for whom politics was enacted through the public institutions of government. Geddes himself steered clear of involvement in formal political debate, believing it a slow and cumbersome method of getting things done, yet his essential political orientation, or ideological outlook, was not so far removed from Hobhouse's own, even if it is hard to categorise in conventional terms.

Martinez-Alier (1987) suggests that Geddes' politics were 'weakly anarchistic', which to the extent that he bypassed conventional political routes towards social change, they were. Bramwell (1989) has dubbed him a 'libertarian socialist', though

Geddes could not be called a socialist in any ordinary sense. He did advocate regional collective ownership of forests, believing that the socialists with their 'urban' orientation had overlooked this vital aspect of social life (Geddes, 1929). In an early paper he was critical of both the Socialist and Co-operative movements, coming down in the end on the side of the co-operatives. His major criticisms of the Socialists were that they made the same mistake as the political economists in not including 'nature' in their calculations of 'value', and that instead of taking ameliorative action in the here and now, they sat around waiting for a revolution, their minds 'filled with the contrast between the sordid facts of everyday life and the luminous glories of the ideal' (Geddes: 1888: 287). Again, Meller has, at different times, classed Geddes with the tradition of cultural criticism begun by Matthew Arnold, with Bergsonian vitalism, as well as with the 'orthogenic' evolutionary theory of Hobhouse (Meller, 1973: 291-315; 1980: 199-223; 1981: 46-71).

Yet in spite of his elusive ideological position, there *were* similarities between Geddes' outlook and that of Hobhouse. Both were essentially humanitarian, with a profound concern for social justice. Each of them wished for an improvement in the human and social habitat, and at the same time cared deeply for non-human forms of life. And in a memoir of Hobhouse, his son recalled how his father had loathed the destruction of the countryside by the rich in their motor cars (Hobson and Ginsberg, 1931: 89-90). This was a sentiment with which Geddes, with his deep love of nature, and his concern with energy efficiency, would have been entirely in accord.

In only one respect were Geddes and Hobhouse truly opposed to one another. Geddes argued for a dialectical relationship between human beings and their environment. If 'nature' in the first place 'determined' what sort of economic activity, social life and ideas would emerge in a region, people, through their (freely or creatively undertaken) economic activity, altered both nature and each other. Social evolution took place through this cycle of action, interaction and reaction, each new change in people, occupation or place spawning new types of people and relationships, new occupations and altered environments. Social, occupational and environmental

location determined the 'consciousness' of the people, their values, beliefs, outlook, desires and way of life, but people, within the constraints imposed by this external 'culture', actively created the present and the future. In his practical projects, Geddes set about altering 'consciousness' by altering physical environments above all. In his ravings about the inadequacies of contemporary education and city life, he was seeking to abolish outdated, ill-planned or haphazard educational or architectural 'survivals' of the past, reorganising, renovating and revitalising only what was good, useful or beautiful for the future of both citizens and city.

Hobhouse, on the other hand, wanted to believe that consciousness could 'determine' being. With the emergence of the self-conscious mind came the possibility that humanity could control and develop its social institutions, and with that 'mind' itself. He could not concede a position which appeared to insist that consciousness might be 'determined' by something other than itself. Far from failing to understand Geddes' sociology, it is likely that Hobhouse understood their differences only too well. Perhaps in Geddes, in spite of his manifest failures of exposition, Hobhouse found a greater threat to his theoretical 'survival' than in the hereditarian theories of the Eugenists. Why else attempt a rapprochement by acknowledging Thomson, while ignoring Geddes? And how else could he have brought himself to concede, in his last major work, *without acknowledging Geddes*, that at 'every stage the physical environment whether by stimulating or inhibiting industrial effort, affects the economic structure and through it bears on the whole life of society', while still maintaining that

> It is man with his desires, his knowledge, his powers of organisation, habits of industry and the like, to which the physical environment sets a problem, and it is in strictness the solution of this problem which *inter alia* conditions development. . . . What the environment does is partly to stimulate, but more particularly to determine, success and failure, and it is through this indirect method of selection that the type acomodates itself to its habitat. . . . The environment never makes arts or institutions, these proceed from the energy of human thought and will, but the environment does go to determine the lines on which human energy can succeed, and so to decide what experiments and tentative beginnings will ripen into institutions (Hobhouse, 1966a [1924]: 97)

Unfortunately, what Hobhouse failed to acknowledge (in common with many others), was that human 'energy', whether physical or psychical, is fundamentally dependent for existence on its natural environment. This omission was to be consequential for British sociology. Hobhousian sociology remained the dominant sociology for a long time beyond his death in 1929, through his successor, Morris Ginsberg. In the chapters which follow, it will be argued that in spite of more or less deliberate attempts to de-throne the Hobhousian perspective as sociology expanded in the post-War period, his influence continues to the present day.

Chapter 4.

Continuity and Change in British Sociology After 1929.

Introduction

This chapter begins with a summary of Hobhousian theory. This was the sociological outlook adhered to and, in some ways developed, by his successor, Ginsberg and was the dominant perspective up to, and beyond, World War II. Second, the differing fates of the Sociological Society and academic sociology in the thirty years between Hobhouse's death in 1929 and Giddens's graduation from Hull in 1959 are reviewed. International developments are considered to the extent that they affected British sociology.

Had this project been intended as a comprehensive history of British Sociology such cursory treatment of this 30 year period would be incomprehensible. Since the primary aim has been to examine the treatment of environmental issues, however, which have been largely absent from sociology from Geddes' time until quite recently,[1] this leap can plausibly be justified. Moreover, the early exclusion of the 'natural' or 'physical' environment as an important aspect of sociological theorising - examined in detail in the previous chapter, was surely a primary factor in its continued neglect.

There is an interesting twist in the history of the fate of 'environment' in recent sociology, however, which can be articulated, briefly, as follows. Hobhouse became the central theorist, and Hobhousian theory the central theory, up to, and for some

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1 There are, inevitably, a few exceptions to the general neglect of environmental issue in sociology, though these tend to be fairly recent in origin- most notably Cotgrove's (1982) *Catastrophe or Cornucopia*. However, most contributions to a distinctively 'environmental' approach to social analysis, before Yearley's (1991) textbook, came from outside sociology (for example, the Club of Rome's *Limits to Growth* (1972), or Gorz, (1980)).

years after World War II. Moreover, it is Hobhouse who must bear the primary responsibility for the exclusion of environmental issues from sociology. With a very few exceptions, there has been no recognisably environmental sociology in Britain until comparatively recently.

Now environmental issues are back on the agenda. In a very short space of time, beginning from around the late 1980s, the issue of environment seems well on the way to becoming - if it is not quite yet - a central concern of contemporary sociology. In this respect 1992 is a significant year, since it marked the appearance in English of Beck's (1986) *Risikgesellschaft* (Risk Society). The reception of this book, and the remarkable similarity between its themes and certain themes in the work of Britain's central contemporary social theorist Anthony Giddens, heralded a new era for the few British sociologists already concerned with environmental issues. In spite of the similarity between his own and Beck's work, however, Giddens can also be usefully compared with his British predecessor Hobhouse. In particular, both conceptualise the role of sociology, the 'reflexive' agent, and the relation between the agent and society, in similar ways. Given Hobhouse's more or less deliberate exclusion of 'environment' from sociology, this theoretical continuity between the beginning of the century and its end is particularly interesting. How closely does Giddens's orientation follow Hobhouse's, and how did he 'inherit' the Hobhousian *oeuvre*? Most importantly, what are the implications of this theoretical orientation for his treatment of environment? The final part of the chapter addresses the first question, prior to a consideration of the second in the final chapter.

The sections to follow, however, review first Hobhousian theory, the fate of the Sociological Society, and the continuation of academic sociology at LSE, including especially its role in the institutionalisation of sociology at other Universities.

'Orthogenesis': A Summary

Aspects of Hobhouse's sociology have already been outlined where relevant above (Chapter 3). What follows is a summary of Hobhouse's work between 1901 and 1924.

Hobhouse repudiated the Darwinian theory of natural selection as applied to the evolution of human societies at an early stage in his career. He insisted that the universally important feature of social development, regardless of differences in form between societies, was the emergence and development of 'mind' in humanity. Individual 'minds', which emerged gradually and accidentally as a product of natural selection, had survival value, even if this was not immediately apparent. From purely instinctive behaviour, via the ability of mind to correlate a gradually expanding range of things, events and experiences, alone and in communication with others, 'mind' acquires the capacity for correlation of means with ends, leading to the development of particular skills, customs and social traditions.

Eventually, human evolution ceases to be governed by the 'blind' forces of nature, and becomes open to further development shaped by the purposive behaviour of individuals. Hobhouse was quite clear that there was no other motor of social development than the multitude of human minds each following its own ends. There was no single factor (biological or material) driving change in a particular direction. Yet his concept of 'ortho-genic' evolution, (literally 'correct', or 'true' evolution), carries a normative dimension - the development towards a universal 'harmony' as the ultimate human purpose. Hobhouse justified this in two ways; first by an appeal to biology - that which was not harmoniously adapted, both in 'organic unity' and to its surroundings, would not, ultimately, survive. Secondly, he appealed to the fact of our common humanity, which ensures that (whether or not we understand this), we share certain fundamental interests. As 'mind' evolved to the stage at which it became self-conscious, therefore, the thing that it became conscious of, above all, was its unity with the rest of humanity. This would lead, ultimately and inevitably, to the emergence of a universal humanitarian ethic.

Although social evolution took different forms in different places, and did not proceed in a single unilinear direction, Hobhouse believed that the comparative study of social institutions, both historical and contemporary, simple and complex, revealed evidence to support his theory. The degree of social development was related to the

degree of development of mind - or rather of many individual minds, working in co-operation and conflict, with and against each other, towards no single pre-defined end, but each towards its own ends. Social development consisted of increases in 1) scope (size of population and/or territory); 2) efficiency (which referred simply to the performance and co-ordination of necessary social functions and did not necessarily involve complex organisation or technological advance); 3) mutuality (peaceful co-operation both within and between nation-states); and 4) freedom. These did not necessarily develop together, and in fact were often at odds with one another. An increase in scope was not inevitably associated with an increase in efficiency or freedom, and an increase in efficiency might not be conducive to either freedom or mutuality, but involve repression and bureaucratic control. A high degree of freedom, mutuality and efficiency might exist in territorially limited societies of low population, but regress as population and territory expanded. Empirically, societies exhibited differences in levels of development, in which one or more elements were more or less advanced or inhibited. The true end-point of the evolution of mind would be the emergence of a peaceful international order of interdependent nation-states, in a humanitarian system which recognised the equal moral worth of all, and encouraged the free development of individual personalities in a vast heterogeneous harmony.

This was the sociological perspective inherited and developed by his successor Ginsberg. Its fate was to be very different from that of Geddes, though some of the latter's ideas, interpreted in a particular way, did survive for a while beyond his death in the work of the Sociological Society.

Continuity and Decay:

Geddesian sociology really died with its three major protagonists, in the early 1930s. Victor Branford, on whose hard work, perhaps more than on any other single person, the foundations and establishment of Sociology in Britain depended, died in 1930, Geddes in 1932. The only other man who had ever been able to collaborate fruitfully with Geddes, J. Arthur Thomson, died in 1933. Of the three, only Branford retained a

major role in the Sociological Society, while Thomson remained a biologist above all, and Geddes' subsequent career took him all over the world, though he kept in touch with the Society via his correspondence with Branford and intermittent visits to London.

After the split from academic sociology at LSE, the Society continued independently, spawning in 1914 the closely associated 'British Association for Regional Survey', renamed the Regional Association after the War in 1918 (Evans, 1986: 49-50). Almost immediately, Branford began to draw in a number of other organisations, with a view to co-operation, including the Civic Education League, the Geographical and Historical Associations, and the School Nature Study Union, as well as the more 'environmentalist' Selbourne Society (Evans, 1986: 50).[2]

In 1920, Branford purchased 65 Belgrave Road, Westminster - which became Le Play House - as a base from which these formally separate but overlapping organisations could operate (D. Farquharson, 1955: 167; Evans, 1986: 56). From 1921, he was joined at Le Play House by a younger colleague, Alexander Farquharson, a man who - while superficially a loyal Geddesian - would play a central role in the demise of early environmental sociology. Again the situation was a complex one, and there is space here to do no more than sketch its outline (but see Evans, 1986, for a fuller exposition, albeit from a non-environmentalist perspective).

What survived of the Geddesian perspective, via these organisations and 'movements', was Geddes' insistence on surveys as a pre-requisite for town and city planning, and his 'Outlook Tower' system of civic education through direct observation and experience. What was lost, or perhaps in some cases had never been fully or adequately absorbed by his followers, was his holistic theoretical outlook which insisted on the study of people in their relations with their natural, as well as social environments.

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2 The Selbourne Society grew out of Gilbert White's (1720-93) *Natural History of Selbourne*. Its members contributed to the rise of the 'natural history essay' (Worster, 1977: 8-16).

The Role of Alexander Farquharson

Farquharson (1882-1954) began his career as a school teacher, but became a District Secretary to the Charity Organisation Society early in 1910, joining the Moral Education league - which later became the Civic Education League - and the Fabian Society at about the same time (Evans 1986: 52-4). After joining Branford at Le Play House, Farquharson soon 'became effectively the organiser and moving force' (ibid: 60). As well as his earlier involvement in the Sociological Society and the Civic Education League, he had also been involved in the Regional Association (ibid: 52, 63).

In spite of his overt efforts towards co-operation, Branford remained most directly involved with the Sociological Society and particularly the *Sociological Review*, and continued to oppose any merging of identities, even when Farquharson began, in 1922, to canvass for amalgamation of the three organisations (ibid: 56, 63), though it was not until the autumn of 1927 that a Committee was formed to discuss this issue formally (ibid: 75). Branford, however, was absent during 1927 and 1928, during which time Farquharson seems to have orchestrated a full-scale almagamation, against the older man's wishes. Older members of the Sociological Society also protested, and Farquharson at this point took the somewhat drastic step of taking legal advice about the status of the Council of the Society (ibid: 76) - an early indication of the lengths to which he was prepared to go to de-throne Branford and take over as the leader of the non-academic sociological movement.

By 1930, Farquharson had succeeded in bringing the three allied organisations together to form one 'unified' Institute of Sociology (Boardman, 1944: 472fn; D. Farquharson, op cit: 167-8; Evans, 1986, 76). But in 1931, the year following Branford's death, a dispute at Le Play House divided the movement yet again. The exact nature of this dispute remains unresolved, but it is clear that Farquharson behaved extremely badly; he appears to have been something of a womanizer. He and Margaret Tatton were the main disputants (Boardman, 1978: 412). These two had been (at the very least) close friends, since as early as 1910 (Evans, 1986: 54), and

both were involved in the foreign fieldwork trips run from Le Play House. From 1927, however, their relationship came under strain, partly as a result of Farquharson's more recent friendship with Dorothea Price, who would later (1933) become his second wife (the first was *not* Margaret Tatton). Another, maybe secondary cause, was that Tatton and others involved in the affairs of Le Play House were keen to move more towards geography, which emphasised the study of natural environments, and in which the concepts of 'region' and 'regional survey' were at their height around 1930. Farquharson, by contrast, and in keeping with his Charity Organisation Society leanings maintained a much deeper interest in (voluntary) social work, and in history, culture and lifestyle than in environment (Evans, 1986: 66, 70-73). There is evidence, in fact, that he made a deliberate attempt as early as 1926, to oust Geddes from the Sociological Society, a date which coincides with his attempts to re-form a closer relationship with Marshall and Ginsberg at LSE (ibid: 68-69).

Matters came to a head all at once. Farquharson's affairs - in which four women - Eleanor Spear, the secretary at Le Play House, and Eileen Thomas, one of the foreign fieldwork tour guides, as well as Farquharson's 'friends' Margaret Tatton and Dorothea Price - were all somehow involved (Evans, 1986: 72-6, 85) became mixed up in the amalgamation of the Regional Association with the Civic Education League and the Sociological Society. Simultaneously, economic recession and complications over Branfords' 'obscurely worded' Will forced financial cutbacks, with the result that Eleanor Spear, who had offered to take a 25% cut in salary, eventually resigned, and Farquharson became a salaried official of the newly formed Institute of Sociology, installing Dorothea as joint secretary after their marriage in 1933. Tatton and others who remained loyal to Geddesian 'environmental sociology' split off from the Institute completely, forming themselves into the Le Play Society and having nothing more to do with the former Sociological Society (Meller, 1990: 308), though there was some

disagreement about which organisation would inherit Branford's money (Evans, 1986: 83-5).[3]

Geddes' own role in all this was a small one, though he had presented a paper at the Institute in October, 1931, making plain his own disagreements with Farquharson's style of civic survey. He also attempted to act as peacemaker between Tatton and Farquharson - with Farquharson once again threatening to go to the law over the matter (Evans, 1986: 84-85). Yet spite of his optimism that the split would lead to a 'doubling of sociological action' (since each side was now free to act independently of the other in its promotion of sociology), the dispute had adverse consequences for the continuance of Geddesian sociology (Boardman, 1978: 412, and 423). Geddes, who would die shortly after this last dispute, had clearly - and naively, as it turned out - thought highly of Farquharson, and had at one time marked him for a successor. Yet there is little doubt that Farquharson's activities were disloyal to both Branford and Geddes, motivated above all, perhaps, by concern for his own career. Dorothea Farquharson (1955: 168) later coupled her husband's work with that of Branford and Geddes, but this is a post-hoc justification for what were really disloyal actions.

Geddes, however, died soon afterwards, and from 1933 Farquharson, with Ginsberg and Carr-Saunders sat on the Editorial Board of the *Sociological Review*, which continued to be the only 'specialist' journal of sociology in Britain until after the War (though the LSE journals *Economica*, founded in 1921, and from 1934 *Politica* did provide an alternative outlet for publication). According to Dorothea Farquharson, this was a time of true collaboration between the LSE and the Institute of Sociology, in

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3 Farquharson again took legal advice on this issue, and Branford's legacy stayed with Le Play House rather than the Le Play Society. In the event, however, hardly any money materialised, since it was largely tied up in foreign investments hit by the depression. It is hard not to feel a certain satisfaction in this, since it is clear both that Farquharson schemed to get rid of Geddes, and that he failed to edit and publish Branford's unpublished works (many of which were ultimately lost) which was a condition of the Will (Evans, 1986: 86-90).

which monthly discussion meetings took place at Le Play House, and T.H. Marshall organised conferences on the 'relationship between sociology and the allied sciences' (1955: 169). Two volumes of papers presented at conferences in 1935 and 1936, however, indicate not so much collaboration as take-over, by people associated, in one way or another, with LSE. Ten out of fifteen papers at the 1935 conference were presented by LSE people: T.H. Marshall (two papers), Morris Ginsberg, Michael Postan, Michael Oakeshott, Harold Laski, J.R. Hicks, Karl Mannheim, D.W Brogan and Alexander Carr-Saunders. Another paper was presented by Hobhouse's friend and colleague, J.A. Hobson and yet another by the Manchester Professor, J.L. Stocks, who was linked with LSE via Tawney, as well as the former LSE student and staff member, Mary Brinton, to whom he was married (*The Social Sciences*, 1936; Dahrendorf, 1995).

The 1935 conference heard papers on history, political theory, and economics, in their relation to the social sciences The 1936 conference carried papers on the relation of biology, anthropology and psychology to sociology. The 1935 conference seems to have been fairly acrimonious, with a conspicuous lack of agreement between the two participating bodies (Barker, 1936: 7; Marshall, 1937: 153), one cause of which was human geography. Some members of the Institute of Sociology, however inadequate their understanding of Geddesian ideas, did not fail to notice the conspicuous absense of this discipline, as a subject of major relevance to their wider concerns. Marshall's report on the teaching of the social sciences merely acknowledged the rapid rise of human geography as a subject for university study, and insisted on its interdependence with other social sciences (Marshall, 1936b: 46-7). The Political Philosopher, Ernest Barker, President of the Institute between 1935 and 1938, as well as of the British committee of International Student Service,[4] summed up both conferences (Barker, 1936; Barker, 1937) After the first conference he drew attention

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4 This Committee, rather than LSE, appears to have been *formally* jointly responsible (with the Institute) for the organising of the conferences.

to the importance of human geography. After the second, when it was still conspicuous by its absense, he complained more strongly:

> There is no gulf between "nature" and "man"; man is immersed in nature, and every science concerned with man is also concerned with the natural foundation of social man. There are a number of such foundations which have to be included in any general reckoning. One is the natural foundation of man's material environment: the foundation of soil or climate, or, as it is expressed in the title of one of the treatises of Hippocrates, of "airs, waters, and places." That is the province of the geographer; and the sociologist has to make his account, as le Play and his followers have done, with the findings of the geographer. (Barker, 1937: 11)

In view of the history of Geddes' exclusion, and Farquharson's deliberate attempts to drop natural environments from regional or civic surveys, Barker's subsequent remark that geography had been omitted 'more by accident than design' should not be taken at its face value!

Farqharson's fate, and the fate of the Institute of Sociology, however, were ultimately not so very different from the fate of Geddes himself. All of them, in the end, were pushed aside in the struggle to establish a respectable and - more importantly - acceptable sociology. In some ways, Geddes' fate may have even been preferable to that of Farquharson, who continued - with only Dorothea for support - to struggle to maintain an ailing sociological organisation, right up to his death in 1954. The Institute moved out to Great Malvern during the War years, and publication of the *Sociological Review* was suspended, due to shortages of paper and other supplies. At the end of the war, financial difficulties remained acute, since very little of the promised legacy of Branford ever materialised (see fn.3 above). Yet the Institute was determined to hold on to its *Review*, and (on the advice of the Farquharsons) in 1948 rejected an offer from LSE to take it over (Evans, 1986: 104, 125). Ginsberg and Carr-Saunders subsequently felt unable to continue to support the Institute or its *Review* and withdrew from the Institute's Council in 1952, after the LSE began publishing its own

British Journal of Sociology(Evans, 1986: 125).[5] Farquharson became ill in 1949, so that it was not he, but T.H. Marshall, who represented the Institute at the Oslo conference at which the International Sociological Association (ISA) was formed. It later emerged - after the Institute did not appear on the list of national sociological organisations in existence at that time, that Marshall, far from representing the Institute and its interests, had informed the ISA that 'the Institute was closing down, and a new organisation would shortly be formed' (Evans, 1986: 127). Marshall, moreover, according to a letter from Dorothea Farquharson to Ethel Lindgren in 1950 'definitely declined to lift a finger' to help the Institute move from Malvern to Ledbury, and 'said he would have nothing to do with' the Farquharsons attempts 'to carry on in London or Ledbury' (cited in Evans, 1986: 127). The Institute was dissolved after Alexander's death in 1954, leaving a library of 15,000 volumes, and a collection of surveys, slides and maps. These were taken on by the University college of North Staffordshire at Keele, who also took on a new series of the *Review*.[6]

During this period, then, the Society set up with such great hopes by Branford in 1903, died a slow and lingering death. But if LSE sociology saw off its ailing rival in the early 1950s, the last vestiges of overt support for (only imperfectly understood) Geddesian ideas had died some twenty years before that, during the early years of Farquharson's reign over the Institute of Sociology.

Intellectual Continuity: Sociology at LSE

Meanwhile, Ginsberg (who had undertaken to teach social philosophy from as early as 1914) had taken on Hobhouse's old role at LSE and continued to espouse and extend

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5 Again, we may wonder if the name was significant. This was to be not just another journal, but *The* British Journal - perhaps an indication both of wanting to dissociate itself from the *Review*, and of claiming a degree of academic superiority.

6 Keele's offer to take over the *Review*, and the Le Play House Library, and the Institute's acceptance of the offer (other contenders were Edinburgh, Leicester's adult education division, and Reading) were both the result of the fact that Keele's founder, A.J. Lindsay, had been a long-standing member of the Institute's Council (Evans, 1986: 132).

his ideas until his own retirement in 1954 (Dahrendorf, 1995; Eldridge, 1980; Macrae, 1961; Mitchell, 1968). Although sociology at LSE did not expand much during these years, its reach grew through the establishment of the subject as an external degree at other universities, for which LSE sociology became the model (Fincham, 1975). This model was one of 'evolutionary sociology, citizenship sociology . . . and political arithmetic' (Colin Crouch, quoted in Dahrendorf, 1995: 378). The first two grew out of the Hobhousian tradition. The third grew from the eugenic strand, via the social biologist Lancelot Hogben, to the demographer David Glass (Bulmer, 1985:12-19).

Continuity

Initially, the take-up of sociology as an optional subject on the BSc in Economics had been slow, partly due to the foreign language requirement. Students were expected to be acquainted with the principle works of sociology in English, French and German, and passages for translation were set as part of the exam (Fincham, 1975: 36).[7] Moreover, the few students who did opt for sociology were found to be getting low marks, which was attributed to the huge scope of the subject and to the fact that it was only one option on the economics degree, making the workload particularly heavy (ibid: 50-52). Additionally, there was a feeling that some students who might otherwise have taken sociology were being tempted to join the Department of Social Science and Administration, set up in 1912. This offered a 'practical training for social work' and awarded, initially, 'certificates' or 'diplomas' rather than degrees (ibid: 55-60).[8] Consequently, from about 1915, plans were begun for a sociology degree. The first

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7 The language requirement at LSE was not dropped until after the War, though it became increasingly redundant. In 1927, students were allowed to take dictionaries into the exam. By 1939, an intermediate level pass in French, German or Italian gave exemption from the language paper; and by 1949, if all other options on the Bsc Econ. were passed except language, candidates were allowed to re-sit that at a later date. It was eventually removed from the syllabus altogether (Fincham, 1975: 36-7).

8 Dahrendorf (1995: 382) notes Marshall's comment that the Department, in the 1920s, was 'popularly regarded as a convenient place for wealthy mothers to send their daughters to when disturbed by the dawning of a social conscience'.

degree in sociology (B.A.) became available in Britain from 1921-22. Moreover, in 1927 the structure of the economics degree (B.Sc Econ) was radically altered, allowing students to specialise in either the Economics or the Sociology option (ibid: 68).

The Department of Social Science and Administration itself grew out of a proposal drawn up by Hobhouse and E.J. Urwick (the founder of a School of Sociology established in 1902-3, in conjunction with the Charity Organisation Society), to endow 'research into the principles and methods of preventing and relieving destitution and poverty', which would be 'a branch of what may become a distinct Sociological Department of the University' (Dahrendorf, 1995: 124-5). The new department, founded on money from the Ratan Tata Foundation, was run by Hobhouse, Urwick and R.H. Tawney. Tawney himself had done his earliest research under Hobhouse, and 'much of what he had to say had been developed' by his elder colleague before him (Halsey, 1996: 86). T.H. Marshall (1893-1982), who went to LSE in 1925 to teach Social Work students, remembered only Hobhouse, and later Ginsberg, especially. It was Ginsberg who invited him to join the Sociology Department (to teach the course on 'Comparative Social Institutions'), where he would remain until 1956 (Marshall, 1973: 402).[9] It is highly likely, indeed, that Marshall's conception of citizenship (which his colleague Richard Titmuss [10] to a large extent shared) derives, in the first instance, from Hobhouse (Rees, 1996: 8-11).

Thus was a great degree of intellectual continuity assured - and there were few other practitioners of the discipline to break with this tradition. This limitation of the number of sociologists in Britain, and sociology's restricted institutional base during the inter-war years, was partly the result of the depression of the 1930s, which not only restricted employment opportunities for sociologists, but also affected the Universities

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9 From 1944-9 Marshall was head of the Department of Social Science and Administration, and from 1954-6 Martin White Professor.

10 Titmuss was on the staff of LSE from 1950-1973.

and University Colleges, financially. This, when added to the somewhat marginal status of LSE as a recently founded institution, and Ginsberg's 'shy' personality, must have had a detrimental effect on institutional development (Shils, 1971).

Change

Neither theoretical continuity nor under-institutionalisation should be over-stated, however. LSE sociology and social science did experience some variation in approach and political perspective in closely related disciplines over the period from 1929 to the 1950s, and there was a gradual expansion of the realm of theoretical sociology. Names associated with LSE sociology (and the social sciences more generally) over the period include the socialist political theorist Harold Laski (staff from 1920-150),[11] the German sociologist Karl Mannheim (staff from 1933-45), another socialist, G.D.H Cole (staff 1930s), the American Edward Shils (up to 1949), and the 'founder' of demographic studies, D.V. Glass (student from 1928-1932, staff 1932-1978).

Environment gets a Second Chance

William Beveridge - an early member of the Sociological Society - became director of LSE in 1919. He had been appointed on the strength of his organising and administrative skills, to rebuild and expand a devastated School after World War I, a role for which he was suited and performed well (Bulmer, 1985: 16; Harris, 1977: 271). The numbers of higher degree students increased substantially between 1919 and 1937, and he succeeded in establishing new Chairs in Anthropology, Economics, Law, International History, Banking and Social Biology. His eventual reward was rejection by his colleagues at LSE. The cause was Social Biology (Harris, 1977: 263, and 285-290).

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11 Laski was somehow involved in the 'case of the Student Vanguard' in 1934, when there was a minor revolt after Beveridge refused LSE house-room for a course on Marxism, though his role in the affair was never clear. In general, he was a controversial figure attracting censure for his 'pestilent talk of class war' (Dahrendorf, 1995: 273-282). His reading list included Hayek's *The Road to Serfdom* as well as Hobhouse's *Elements of Social Justice* (Fincham, 1975:91).

Beveridge, whose concept of 'social science' was closer to that of Geddes than Hobhouse, was keen to link sociology more strongly to its bases in the natural sciences (Fincham, 1975:101; Harris, 1977:285). To complete what had been begun at LSE, he advocated

> a third group of social studies. . . dealing with the natural bases of economics and politics, with the human material and its physical environment, and forming a bridge between the natural and social sciences. (Beveridge, cited in Harris, 1977: 286)

Social Biology was just one among this third group. But Hobhouse - who would not live long enough to meet its incumbent, Hogben - complained that Social Biology was an 'odd name' and that Beveridge's proposal gave the impression that sociology had been inadequately taught up to now (Fincham, 1975: 100-101; Harris, 1977: 287). As with Geddes, he seems to have felt threatened by an approach to social life that did not insist on the overwhelming capacity of mind to control the conditions of its own development.

Lancelot Hogben and LSE

Hobhouse, however, appeared to be the only objector, and Lancelot Hogben (1895-1975) was appointed in 1930. H.G. Wells - a self-confessed 'amateur of adult education and a dealer in general ideas' - chairing his Inaugural Lecture on 23rd October, 1930, spoke of his hopes for the new subject:

> In the hands of a biologist, economics become merely one special case of the science of ecology, the science of the balance and welfare of species. He sees humanity maintaining itself in an environment which not only changes, but which humanity itself is continually changing, wittingly and unwittingly (Wells, 1930: 3).

How much of this conception of economics Wells had absorbed from Geddes is impossible to say, though Geddes had clearly realised the similarity of their ideas when, towards the end of his life he made an open plea for Wells's collaboration (Boardman, 1978: 418). Nor would Hogben have disappointed Geddes, either in style or substance. He began by alienating a good portion of his audience at LSE by declaring that the

social sciences could no longer cling on to the framework of a philosophical tradition 'nurtured from Abelard to Kant in servile intimacy with the requirements of apologetics' (Hogben, 1930: 6). Hogben went on to make it plain that he believed both heredity and environment (social and natural or physical), were important factors in evolution (ibid: 10-12), cautiously advising that the natural selection theory, in the hands of Weismann, had become so rigid that

> Environment as an aspect of the problem of development faded out of the picture. For a generation biologists were hypnotised by the discredit into which which the Lamarckian teaching had fallen, till the progress of experimental embryology and the new cell anatomy relegated Weismann's hypothesis of germinal selection to the same limbo. . . . Social development is the communication of social tradition from one generation to another, biologically determined by the extraordinary range of man's conditioned behaviour. Organic evolution is brought about by the transmission of new heritable properties throught the gametes. The mechanism of one is education. The mechanism of the other is sexual selection (Hogben, 1930: 11).[12]

Dahrendorf's account suggests that Hogben's demise as 'Research Professor' after only seven years was almost wholly due to the fact that Hogben's research laboratory was a highly visible (loud and smelly) part of the school (1995:256-263). Harris (1977: 286-90), suggests that Hogben and Beveridge were forced out, amid complaints that Beveridge favoured Hogben's department financially. Part of the cause was the Great Depression, which forced the Rockefeller Foundation, which had donated £200,000 towards Beveridge's new Chairs - to withdraw much of its financial support. No-one was appointed to replace Hogben, who resigned at the end of 1936. Beveridge, whose appointment he had been, and whose conception of 'social science' must have been to a great extent shaped by the early discussions at the Sociological

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12 It is odd that Bulmer (1985: 18), who cites Harris (1977) selectively, should emphasise Beveridge's definition of social biology as 'genetics, population, vital statistics, heredity eugenics and dysgenics', rather than his insistence on the importance of environment. This may be an illustration of sociology's historians writing as if events were 'all for the best'. Hogben was *certainly not* a eugenist (Jones, 1983: 169; Dahrendorf, 1995: 259). Nor was he a Geddesian, though he did have an interest in energy economics (Bramwell, 1989: 31).

Society, resigned soon afterwards, in 1937, with the complaint that LSE 'would have nothing of my Science of Society, as learned from Huxley and other men of science' (Dahrendorf, 1995: 264).

Hogben's only positive legacy, according to Dahrendorf (1995) was that he cleared the decks, by 'the dismissal of the simpler assumptions of eugenics' for the establishment of the discipline of demography. Both Carr-Saunders and David Glass would benefit, in the long-term, from Hogben's short spell at LSE. That it was his biological legacy that survived, rather than his potential environmentalism, is probably due less to Hogben himself than to the already established ethos at LSE, which rejected the importance of all but the social environment.

Ironically, Hogben's limited impact may have actually contributed further to Geddes' exclusion. As Meller (1990: 308-9) suggests, the establishment of social statistics was at odds with his holistic approach to society as the interaction of environment, function, and organism. David Caradog-Jones, for example of the Social Science department at Liverpool, would later write that

> To describe the study of a community demands a close study of the people who compose it, and of the environment in which they work and spend their free time. . . . [But] while the environment is to be studied in its effect upon the community, the main interest is focused on the community. That is where the Social Survey differs from the type of Regional Survey associated in this country with the names of Patrick Geddes and Victor Branford. Their emphasis is on the locality, their aim to make a comprehensive study of all its features as they have developed, and the interaction of these features with the life of the inhabitants.(Jones, undated, c.1946: 10)

This exhibits a reasonable understanding of Geddes' idea of what Sociology and Regional Survey entailed, but omits both its purpose (the improvement of environment for the alteration of consciousness, and therefore social relations) and his corresponding emphasis on the importance of conservation. In any case, Jones is quite clear. 'A good case can be made for each type of survey' but the Geddesian survey is not a social survey, and hence outside the province of social science (ibid.). Thus, by the mid-1950s, Ruth Glass could attack Geddes with impunity. He, Branford, and

afterwards Mumford, were representative of the amateur approach to Town Planning, adhered to up to the 1920s by a 'motley group of enthusiasts in semi-philosophical speculation and social reform', eccentric and benevolent, 'often endearing and no doubt stimulating', but in the end, more of a handicap than a help to the development of a British urban sociology (1955: 12-13).[13] The articles she cites as examples of Geddes approach, however, are among his later contributions to the *Sociological Review*. It is impossible not to wonder whether, had she read either Geddes 1931 contribution to *Life*, or the earlier work on economics, she might have been more generous in her assessment.

Intellectual Continuity: Personnel

During the War years, when both staff and students were greatly diminished in number, and LSE was evacuated to Cambridge, both Ilya Neustadt and Norbert Elias would spend time there. Elias probably began work on *The Civilising Process* while in London, and though it is difficult to speculate about the sources of his ideas, which he admitted were quite vague initially (Elias, 1994a: 53), it is at least certain that, as well as Sumner's (1906) *Folkways*, Ogburn's (1922) *Social Change*, and others, he read Ginsberg's (1934) *Sociology* (Van Krieken, forthcoming).

Van Krieken suggests that five interconnected principles underlay Elias's sociology. At least three of these are consistent with the Hobhouse-Ginsberg tradition, though they may, of course, have had other intellectual foundations as well as, or instead of these two. First, human beings engage in intentional action, but the outcome of the combination of intentional human actions is unplanned or unintended (compare Hobhouse, 1966a [1924]: 325-6) Second, human beings can only be understood as part of networks of social relations (compare Ginsberg, 1934: 7; Hobhouse, 1966c [1920]: 23). Third, human societies can only be understood as consisting of long-term

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13 Glass gave Manual Castells a similar treatment in a *New Society* Review entitled 'Verbal Pollution', concluding that she did not know of 'anything else that is a similarly slovenly, fatty, pretentious concoction' (Glass, 1977, cited in Eldridge, 1980: 169-170).

processes of development and change (compare Hobhouse, 1951 [1906]; 1966b [1924]). It is difficult to attempt to draw any strong or direct connection between Hobhouse and Elias, not least because Elias himself had a tendency to play down the influence of other writers on his work (Van Krieken, forthcoming; Kilminster, 1991: viii). There are, however, some obvious similarities between Hobhouse's concept of the evolution of 'mind' and Elias's conception of the evolutionary process of the 'psyche', in both his early work (Elias, 1994b [1939]) and his later (Elias, 1991). And in the preface to the former, first published in 1939, Elias (who was awarded a Senior Research Fellowship at LSE on the strength of it) did acknowledge his debt to Ginsberg (Elias, 1994b: xvii; see also Elias, 1994a:62).

Neustadt also came to Britain to work on his PhD, after escaping from Belgium during the War years. He had been hoping to work with Harold Laski in the Department of Political Science - a central part of LSE, but was referred to Ginsberg, since Laski was, at that time, 'unavailable' (Marshall, 1982: xi). Neustadt remained at LSE until his appointment at Leicester in 1949.

In the immediate post-war period and up to the post-Robbins expansion of the early 1960s, A.H. Halsey, Joe and Olive Banks, Michael Banton, Basil Bernstein, Percy Cohen, Norman Dennis, Ralf Dahrendorf, David Lockwood, Cyril Smith, J.H.Smith, Asher Tropp, and John Westergaard (Halsey, 1982:151), all had contact with LSE sociology, as did others, either as postgraduate students or staff including Ronald Fletcher (postgraduate, early 1950s), Herminio Martins (mid-1950s), the historian Asa Briggs (Bsc. Econ. 1941), Mark Abrams (Bsc. 1927), Stephen Cotgrove (Bsc Econ. 1947, PhD 1957), Eric Dunning (London External, Bsc. Econ. 1959), John Eldridge (BSc. Econ, 1957), John Goldthorpe (BSc. Econ. 1956), and Donald Macrae (staff 1945-86).[14] Very few, if any, of these sociologists would admit to being

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14 Primary source: *British Sociological Association Register* (1973).

'Hobhousians'.[15] Certainly, none of them devoted a life-time, as Ginsberg did, to the more or less explicit extension and consolidation of Hobhousian theory, and some, like Lockwood, made theoretical contributions apparently at odds with the Hobhousian emphasis on the development of social harmony via the evolution of mind. Others quite deliberately rejected the hegemony of the Hobhouse-Ginsberg tradition of sociology-as- synthesis as they struggled for professional recognition. Sociology should be, they believed, a specialism in its own right, delivered by rigorously trained specialists. This was the rationale behind the foundation of the sociology Teacher's Section in the BSA (Banks, 1967; Abrams, 1985: 196).

Halsey remembers Ginsberg as 'the advocate of a nostalgic, rationalist humanitarianism', which 'would not do' as a theory of progress, for his cohort of aspirant sociologists (Halsey, 1982:160). Nevertheless, the very fact that they continued to have faith in some 'English, Fabian, Labour-movement idea of progress' is unlikely to be as divorced from the circumstances of their University education as they might since have come to believe (ibid; see also Macrae, 1961: 38-45). Perhaps somewhat paradoxically, in view of his (almost) unshakeable faith in harmony and progress, Hobhouseian theory may even have received an indirect boost during the War years. As Fincham points out, in spite of sociology's increasing drive for value-freedom or objectivity, 'normative' theory became much more attractive after the rise of Nazism (1975:78).

Institutional Continuity: Expansion

By 1945, although there was no other university with a Chair in Sociology (Shils, 1971: 779) its institutional expansion was already underway. It was taught as an

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15 Fletcher is the exception here. In volume 2 of his (1971) *Making of Sociology* the exposition of Hobhouse is generally admiring. He also edited a memorial volume for Ginsberg, in which he bemoans the fact that the 'professional "labellers" - so busy nowadays in the sociological scene - have done their superficial work' on Ginsberg and Hobhouse, caricaturing them as old-fashioned, out-moded figures (Fletcher, 1974: 1)

external degree of the University of London, ensuring that the course structures and subject matter remained very similar between 1946 and 1962 (Fincham, 1975: 131). The University Colleges of Nottingham, Hull, Exeter and Leicester each entered students for the external degree in sociology from the University of London (LSE), where course structure only began to change as they were granted charters (in 1948, 1954, 1955, 1957 respectively), and became universities in their own right, though LSE continued to be regarded as *the* place to do sociology (Macrae, 1961: 7; Fincham, 1975: 132-4).

At Hull, which received its charter in 1954, sociology was first introduced as part of the BSc in Economics, and could be taken in three papers out of eight in finals. Before 1961, the subjects were social institutions, sociological theory and analysis, and either general or social psychology, or industrial relations. It was also possible to take sociology, with one other subject, as a BA. (Fincham, 1975: 140).

Exeter received its charter in 1955. G. Duncan Mitchell, whose own first degree was the LSE BSc Econ., was in charge of developing sociology. The course structure there included options on the history of sociological thought (taught by Mitchell), social psychology, the development of modern Britain, and social administration, along with capitalism, marriage and the family, and the institution of property (Fincham, 1975: 141).

At Leicester, which received its charter only in 1957, Neustadt initially had sole responsibilty for teaching the external degree. He was joined after three years by J. A. Banks (again initially LSE, and more or less openly anti-Ginsberg), as assistant lecturer, and after six years by Elias (Banks, 1967; Marshall, 1982: xii). The Leicester course included compulsory courses in General and Social Psychology, and teaching of sociology was divided between Theoretical Empirical and Applied sociology, though there was an emphasis on the higher status of theory. Elias was primarily responsible for both the psychology, and the introductory first year course, which continued unchanged for some years after he retired (Brown, 1987: 534-535).

> The first and largest part of this course consisted of 'Comparative Studies of Contemporary Societies at Different Stages of Development'. It was followed by 'Selected Theories of Social Development': Comte, Marx, Durkheim, Weber, Hobhouse and others. . . (ibid)[16]

In general then, the overall picture of academic sociology is of both institutional and theoretical continuity, at least up to the mid-1950s, and to some extent beyond, at both LSE, and the University Colleges at which it could be taken as an external degree. Hobhousian theory continued to be taught, whether directly through his own work, or indirectly through the work of Ginsberg and others. Such textbooks as were available at this time tended to continue in use over a long period, which is surely an indication of a more or less stable conceptual base. Ginsberg's (1934) *Sociology* was still in print as late as 1959. Similarly, a (1938) text by Ginsberg's American student, Jay Rumney (with Joseph Maier) *The Science of Society*, again with a broadly Hobhouse-Ginsbergian structure and content, re-appeared in a second edition in 1953. *The Study of Society* (1939), which has a distinctly social-psychological bent, and which was edited by Ginsberg, in collaboration with E.C. Bartlett, E.J. Lindgren and R.H. Thouless, was re-printed in 1946. Sprott's (undated) *Sociology* written in the same vein, ran from at least 1949 to 1967. Other books were of course used, and recommended as texts, but these were so few that Sprott was able to claim in 1957 that his own book, and Ginsberg's of the same title, were the only two textbooks of their kind in Britain (Sprott, 1957: 609).

This section, though, has focussed on continuity at the expense of a slowly building theoretical undercurrent which had its roots as early as 1946 (Fincham, 1975:

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16 Brown adds that his notes from these lecture, which he attended as a newly appointed assistant lecturer, indicate that only Comte and Marx got much attention in Elias's lectures. This statement has been omitted from the quote, since it is highly possible that this was a result of selective perception on his part. Other statements in the same article, which refer to 'stages of development' and advocacy of a 'unilinear pre-determined model of social development' indicate that even if Hobhouse's name was mentioned less frequently, his theoretical orientation was not entirely abandoned.

122), a date which corresponds with Shils's arrival at LSE. This undercurrent is reviewed briefly below, before turning to Giddens's academic background, and career history, as the basis for an exploration of his theoretical similarities with Hobhouse.

Theoretical Departures: Discontinuity?

Hobhousian sociology was not the only sociology available to students prior to the post-War expansion of the sixties. Yet sociology was often, during these years, seen as a subject which had developed on different lines in different places. Histories of the subject produced around the war years, for example, often included a section on national developments in sociology (Barnes & Becker, 1938 Volume II; Gurvitch & Moore, 1945; Barnes, 1948; Maus, 1956; Becker & Boskoff, 1957). Even after this period, distinctions were sometimes made between its intellectual or institutional bases in different countries (Mitchell, 1968; Hawthorn, 1976). By the 1950s, however, some European and American sociologists, particularly Durkheim, Weber, Parsons and Shils were all beginning to find homes in British sociology (Fletcher, 1971a: 250). Marx had a small number of supporters, but his work was often regarded with suspicion by the older generation (for example Macrae, 1961: 7), and commonly seen as part of sociology's pre-history, rather than as sociology proper (Fletcher, 1971: 163-164; Mitchell, 1968: vii).

Shils, arriving at LSE in 1946, was instrumental in broadening the theoretical bases of British sociology (Bulmer, 1985: 5). He remained here until 1949, accepting a post as Reader in sociology at LSE (1946) as well as a Fellowship at Cambridge. It seems to have been he who encouraged the serious teaching of Weber at LSE (Hopper, 1997),[17] as well as Parsons's (1937) *The Structure of Social Action* (Bulmer, 1985: 22), though Mannheim, too, had an interest in at least some of Weber's ideas,

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17 There is evidence to suggest that Ginsberg taught some aspects of Weberian theory, but may not have done so in a sympathetic manner. Hopper (1997) concludes that 'there is little evidence that Ginsberg, Mannheim and Marshall successfully pressed upon their students a need to take account of Weber when doing sociology'.

and may have helped to spread their popularity (Shils, 1971: 784). For Durkheim, this was something of a renaissance after a period of years in the sociological wilderness. Although he was highly regarded as an exemplary and professional sociologist by Branford and others (see Chapter 3; Abrams, 1968)[18], he had soon afterwards become known as the purveyor of the 'unsound' theory of a 'group mind', a reputation to which Hobhouse certainly contributed, though it may have originated with Robert McIver (Studholme, 1995).[19]

This is an important point, since it illustrates yet again the tendency for Hobhouse to pursue single-mindedly a monolithic vision of sociology. As already pointed out, there were sufficient theoretical similarities between Geddes and Hobhouse for the two men to have collaborated. Yet Hobhouse (quite deliberately) marginalised his Scottish rival. With Durkheim, too, Hobhouse had much in common. Celestin Bouglé, in a review of *Social Development*, therefore, complained that in spite of a great degree of agreement with Durkheim, Hobhouse disregarded his work (Bouglé, 1925: 195). In *Social Development* (1966a [1924]: 179-87), for example, Hobhouse drew on McIver to argue for the existence of a 'social mentality', but did not mention Durkheim in this or in any other context.

After Hobhouse's death, however, the idea of Durkheim as the purveyor of an unsound theory of a group mind appears to have died a gentle, though not immediate

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18 The idealist philosopher Bernard Bosanquet, who read Durkheim's paper at the Sociological Society in 1904, had stated (1899: 35) that his were 'amongst the most original and suggestive works of modern sociology'.

19 Collini (1979: 221, n.50) speculates that McIver, who was external examiner at LSE for a while (1911-1914) was the main influence on Hobhouse at around this time. However, it is worth bearing in mind that McIver was much the younger of the two, and Hobhouse the senior colleague. It is my personal belief that the idea of Durkheim as the purveyor of an unsound theory of a group mind comes, in the first place, from Hobhouse - though more research would be required to substantiate this. It is notable that Hobhouse pursued the same strategy in his published work with regard to Durkheim as to Geddes - he simply ignored him. This does not mean, however, that he did not spread his opinion of Durkheim by other means.

death. Ginsberg's (1934) *Sociology* claims Durkheim as a thinker comparable with Hobhouse in both stature and orientation (1934:14). Ginsberg noted Durkheim's belief that 'the fundamental categories of thought have a social origin' (ibid: 119), but though the ensuing discussion mentioned the 'problem of the group mind' (ibid: 120) it was not attributed specifically to Durkheim.[20]

The same pattern seems to be true of McIver, who mentioned Durkheim's fallacious theory - which is also attributed to others - only briefly in *Community* (1917: 76). He appeared to have changed his mind by the time of *Society* (1937). McIver's textbook was very popular, and was reprinted nine times up to 1947, to be followed in 1949 by a substantially re-written collaborative work, with Charles Page (McIver & Page, 1949). By the time this last version appeared, Parsons's (1937) *Structure of Social Action*, in which Durkheim's erroneous 'group mind' theory had been re-assessed, was beginning to be more widely read. McIver and Page (1949:229), making no reference to Durkheim, merely warn against blundering into the group mind fallacy, stating that mind 'is a possession of individual human beings, whatever the group ties that bind them together'.

In combination with the continuation of the Hobhousian tradition, therefore, a small group of European and American sociologists were gradually coming to be more acceptable in Britain. Durkheim and Weber, as interpreted by Parsons and taught by Shils, were set on the path to becoming - though they were not yet, the central figures in the history of sociology.[21] Marx would have to wait slightly longer for his inclusion as a 'founding father'. As McLellan's (1977) comprehensive bibliography shows, the

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20 An interesting twist to the story of Hobhouse's relationship with Durkheim is that when, by 1966, the tables had turned, and Durkheim's star was again rising in British sociology, while Hobhouse's was on the wane, Ginsberg compared Durkheim unfavourably with Hobhouse, and rather snootily claimed that 'despite the great and continuing influence of his writings it does not seem to me that he succeed in providing the conceptions needed' to overcome the difficulties of creating a synthesis of social studies (Ginsberg, 1966: xiv).

21 According to Fincham (1975: 130) Parsons's work began to appear on reading lists in the early 1950s.

fifty years between 1910 and 1960, produced only 34 commentaries on Marx and his work, compared with 52 in the decade from 1960 - 1970, and 42 between 1970 and 1977. His continued exclusion from the ranks of 'proper' sociology may have been, in part, due to his exclusion by Parsons. His eventual inclusion, however, was largely due to factors external to academic sociology (see below, p.198).

International Developments: Parsons

Parsons, of course, is another key figure in the history of sociology, both in Britain and internationally, in the post-war period. His major contribution, in *The Structure of Social Action* (1937) was to reconstruct sociology's recent history. Most of this was contained, however inadequately, in Sorokin's encyclopaedic textbook *Contemporary Sociological Theories* (1928), which covered an enormous range of sociological theories, which had been appearing 'like mushrooms after rain' since the mid-1870s (Sorokin, 1956 [1928]: xvi).[22]

In deliberate contrast with his former teacher and colleague, Parsons concentrated on four theorists: Alfred Marshall, Vilfredo Pareto, Durkheim and Weber. He suggested, moreover, that all four thinkers had contributed to the emergence and development of a *'single coherent body of theory'* (Parsons, 1968a [1937]: ix, xxi), rather than that each work was a distinct and distinctive contribution in its own right. *En route*, he sought to rescue Durkheim from his role as the advocate of the 'unsound' theory of the existence of a 'group mind', which he later claimed to have come across at LSE in 1924-5 (1968a [1937]: ix fn.).

For British sociologists, trained in the Hobhousian tradition, the appeal of Parsons was to be found in three features of his theoretical work which were entirely

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22 There is no reference to Geddes in Sorokin's book, though the Le Playists are seen to be a school in their own right. Sorokin also considered other geographic theorists, biological theorists, Social Darwinist, racialist, and Bio-social theorists under separate headings. This sophisticated classification of theorists is worthy of further study, since it appears to avoid an over-simplistic lumping together of qualitatively different theories under a single heading.

compatible with this tradition. These were, first, his wholesale rejection of biological factors in social life;[23] his emphasis on value-consensus, or social harmony; and third, the importance he placed on the development of a single 'unitary' and 'scientific' theory of social life. Each of these features had already played a role in the establishment and development of Sociology at LSE.[24] And if the acceptance of Parsonian theory meant the implicit (at the very least) rejection of Hobhouse, the founder, this was facilitated by Ginsberg's retirement and justified by the need to create sociology as a profession, and as a science in its own right with its own concepts and terminology.

Anthony Giddens and the British Tradition

If, by the late 1950s, Hobhousian theory co-existed with other, national and international developments, it is difficult to see how Giddens could be said to be part of a specifically British tradition. His 'project' has encompassed a critique and evaluation of almost the entire spectrum of classic and contemporary social theories, beginning with *Capitalism and Modern Social Theory* (CMST) in 1971. Here he dealt,

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23 Mitchell (1968) suggests that it was with Parsons that sociology first began to theorise on its own terms instead of on terms borrowed from biology. This is not really true of British sociology which, since the establishment of Hobhousian theory, had rejected biology as any but a minor factor in social evolution. What is true, perhaps, is that Parsons succeeded in making the issue of biology a marginal issue, where Hobhouse, due his obsessive reiteration of the futility or inapplicability of Darwinism for sociology, and to his insistence on being the sole theorist of any repute, failed. On this see especially Parsons, 1937: 110-114.

24 There is, in fact, a direct connection between Parsons and Hobhouse from 1924-5 when Parsons was at LSE, though too much should not be made of any theoretical similarities. Parsons acknowledged that he had 'got a good deal' from both Hobhouse and Ginsberg, though Malinowski's influence was greater (Parsons, cited in Wearne, 1989: 37). In addition, he would later lecture on the theories of Alfred Marshall, Hobhouse, Tonnies, Simmel, Weber and Durkheim during the 1930s (ibid: 63).

not with either Hobhouse,[25] or Parsons, directly, but with Marx, Durkheim and Weber. CMST was followed by *The Class Structure of the Advanced Societies* (1973), in which he dealt with Marx's, Weber's and other more recent concepts of class, and introduced the concept of structuration. Structuration theory received its earliest exposition in his *New Rules of Sociological Method* in 1976 (1993 [1976]), where Giddens dealt explicitly with Parsons, as well as with phenomenology, ethnomethodology, and the 'linguistic turn' in social theory. The theory was developed more fully in *the Constitution of Society* (1984), which incorporated insights initially developed in the first volume of *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (1981). *The Nation State and Violence* (1985) entailed a substantive application of the 'contemporary critique'. Giddens's work appeared to take a new direction in 1990, with the publication of *The Consequences of Modernity* (1991a [1990]), where environmental problems first became a major feature of his work. *Modernity and Self Identity* (1991b) involved a continuation and development of some of the themes explored in *Consequences*, while *the Transformation of Intimacy* (1992) took up others. Most recently a third volume of the 'contemporary critique' has appeared, in which earlier themes are combined with newer ones to produce *Beyond Left and Right* (1994).[26]

In the light of this history of engagement with almost everything *except* the Hobhousian 'national' tradition, Giddens appears to be firmly embedded in the post-war period - a period marked by an increasingly international discipline and a diversity of

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25 To my knowledge, Giddens has only once mentioned either Hobhouse or Ginsberg by name (Giddens, 1995: 3). Even his essay on 'Britishness and the Social Sciences' (in Giddens, 1996: 112-120) which mentions Fabian Socialism and the establishment of Sociology at LSE, ignores both Hobhouse and Ginsberg.

26 This, of course does not exhaust the entire catalogue of Giddens's published work, though these are the works most often refered to in this and the chapter to follow. Other contributions of particular significance include *Studies in Social and Political Theory* (1977), *Central Problems in Social Theory* (1979), *Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory* (1982), and *Social Theory and Modern Sociology*(1987).

theoretical perspectives, and heralded by Gouldner's (1971) warning of an approaching 'crisis'. Giddens's academic background, however, shows him to have been very much in contact with the earlier tradition, at least at the beginning of his career. That he chose to engage in contemporaneous debates and concerns, while ignoring those of the recent past, is not surprising. Nor is it necessarily an indication that he had either avoided, or else had easily shrugged off, the ideas and outlook of the earlier generation. It is rather the general tone and outlook of Giddens's developed theory, and its not always explicit ideological bias, which betrays his identification with a distinctively British tradition. His academic background indicates the extent to which his contact with the British tradition was tempered at an early stage by theoretical developments and debates in sociology. It is hardly surprising that he has engaged in these as much as any of his contemporaries.

Giddens: Continuity and Change

Born in 1938, Giddens embarked on his University career in 1956, when he arrived at Hull to read philosophy. Philosophy was not running that year, so he registered for sociology instead, which was one of the things open to him, as someone with 'not very good academic qualifications' (Giddens, cited in Mullan, 1987: 94). The sociology department at Hull was at that time undergoing a period of transition, having received its charter in 1954, thus releasing its degree course from that taught at LSE. Giddens's own recollection of that time is of the influence of the anthropologist and socialist, Peter Worsley, and of the existence of a strong Socialist Society, of which he was a (somewhat non-committed) member (ibid).

Graduating with a first from Hull, Giddens spent a year at LSE, writing an M.A. on the sociology of sport. Ginsberg had of course retired by this time, and though he continued teaching in the department until the mid-1960s must have been, by this stage, a fairly marginal figure. Giddens was supervised by Asher Tropp and David Lockwood in turn (Bryant and Jary, 1991: 3) both of whom were themselves LSE graduates, though Lockwood's earliest theoretical contributions (1956; 1964) as noted above, took issue with functionalism and emphasised conflict. They were

definitely anti-Parsonian, though not necessarily anti-Hobhousian, since Hobhouse did recognise the existence of conflict in society, although he saw this as a sign of the imperfect development of the unity towards which human evolution was tending. Giddens, by contrast, seems to have at least flirted with functionalism, since his first published work, almost certainly written while he was still at Hull, was a distinctly functionalist analysis of the social structure of a university hall of residence (Giddens, 1960).

After LSE, in 1961, Giddens was appointed to a lectureship at Leicester, where the leading figures were Elias and Neustadt, both of whom had also had early (perhaps formative) contact with LSE sociology. He was, apparently, impressed by Elias as a role model, and it was Neustadt who was a major intellectual influence (Bryant and Jary, op cit.). As with the similarities between Elias and Hobhouse, however, it is tempting to find continuity between Giddens's insistence that the autonomy of the self involves control and the overcoming of compulsion or addiction, and Elias's history of manners.

The department at Leicester awarded a particulary high status to theory (above, p.188). He has said that it was interests developed there which prompted him to produce CMST (Giddens, cited in Mullan, 1987: 95). These interests were not confined to Leicester, and are well illustrated by, for example, Cohen's (1968) *Modern Social Theory* and Rex's (1961), *Key Problems of Sociological Theory*. Cohen (born 1928) graduated from LSE in the 1950s, and was a contemporary of Giddens's at Leicester. Rex (born 1925), was educated in South Africa, and became lecturer in sociology at Leeds. His book was, perhaps, more influential than Cohen's, and was reprinted many times up to at least 1970.

Both Cohen and Rex addressed theoretical problems. Their main arguments are, these days, familiar to most sociologists. Cohen was concerned with the uses and explanatory value of contemporary sociological theories at a general or schematic level, to the extent that they dealt with either action or structure, either coercion and conflict or integration and consensus. Most especially, he was concerned with the

failings of Parsonian functionalism as an attempt at the integration of structure and action. Parsons tended to reify social systems, and scarcely discussed action or interaction at all, and consequently could not explain social change (Cohen, 1968: 237). Yet, Cohen concluded, most contemporary debates were sterile - it was time to move beyond the foundations established by the classical theorists (Cohen, 1968: 239), bearing in mind the purpose which social theory was enlisted to serve. Rex took issue with positivism and empiricism in sociology and advocated a theoretical approach to research problems. Like Cohen, he complained that Parsons had no room for conflict in his theory, and the 'action frame of reference' he advocated came from Weber rather than Parsons. Unlike Cohen, however, he also devoted a significant amount of space to Marx.

The 'Marxist incursion' began between 1956 and 1963 (Abrams, 1981). Its growth coincided with both the general expansion of British universities, the phenomenal growth of sociology itself, marked by a rise in numbers of both students and staff up to 1970 (Abrams, 1981: 62-66). This period also witnessed the end of post-war optimism and complacence. Famously, Goldthorpe and Lockwood's affluent worker studies, published in the mid-60s, refuted the embourgeoisement thesis (workers had never had it so good, but they were still working class). This was the end of the 'end of ideology' (Bell, 1960).

Ralf Dahrendorf, in his recent history of the LSE, gives a useful account of some of the contributing factors that led to the 'troubles' of the 1960s.

> President De Gaulle's antiquated authoritarianism in France and the oppositionless Grand Coalition in Germany had created their own extra-parliamentary protests. In Britain, the great expectations of many which greeted the Labour Government of 1964 soon turned into disenchantment an a feeling of betrayal which encouraged a 'new left'. Everywhere the question was raised: what can we do to change things? How can democracy be made more real? Increasingly the answer was: by helping ourselves, by direct action. The American Civil Rights campaigns but also the 'free speech' student movement at Berkeley set the tone. In Germany the Emergency Powers legislation brought hundreds of thousands out into the streets. The demand for nuclear disarmament had much the same effect in Britain.(1995: 444)

The international nature of the discontent (perhaps particularly the Vietnam wars), which was transmitted across national boundaries not just by the movements of people but the media of mass-communications, is emphasised in Dahrendorf's account. Events not just at home, or in America or Europe, but in South-East Asia and South Africa, were international issues which turned a 'widespread latent readiness for direct action' into action itself.

Capitalism and Modern Social Theory

In such circumstances, it is not really surprising that by 1971, Giddens should have begun the task of a 'radical revision' of contemporary social theory by re-constructing the history of sociology, with Marx as a central figure (Giddens, 1971: vii). Giddens must have learned Hobhousian theory as an undergraduate, spent his early years as a professional academic sociologist coming to terms with the decline of both the Hobhousian and Parsonian emphasis on harmony or value-consensus,[27] and the rise of Marxism or conflict theory. And while he may have missed the worst of the 'trouble' in Britain, by being out of the country between 1966 and 1968, he can hardly have been unaware of the upheavals going on at Berkeley, since for the second year of his time abroad he was in Los Angeles.

Capitalism and Modern Social Theory has been an enormously important book in sociology. It has been translated into Chinese, Indonesian, Italian, Japanese, Portugese and Spanish, and sold well over 100,000 copies world-wide. Approximately 38% of the total sales have been in Britain, making it one of the most successful social science publications ever published by Cambridge University Press. Giddens's achievement was threefold. First, he completed the process of the reconstruction of sociology's history begun by Parsons, while substantially re-writing that history itself.

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27 Their rejection was never total. Rex (cited in Mullan, 1985: 13) has spoken with approving of Hobhouse and Ginsberg and their concern with social evolution and comparative sociology. And at least one LSE graduate of the 1950s, Ronald Fletcher, found nothing incompatible in his simultaneous adherence to Hobhouse and (especially) Ginsberg, as well as Parsons (Fletcher, 1956; Fletcher, 1971b).

Parson's had proposed that Durkheim and Weber (as well as Marshall and Pareto) had contributed to the emergence of a single body of *theory*, in direct opposition to Sorokin, whose (1928) textbook, written for a post-graduate course in sociology was a compilation of sociological *theories*. Giddens, by contrast, acknowledged theoretical differences between Durkheim and Weber, while making their contributions 'a debate with the ghost of Marx'.[28] Second, he sought to rescue Durkheim from the functionalist interpretation made popular by Parsons. Finally, Giddens's own interpretation of Durkheim's work set itself deliberately at odds with his reputation as the unsound theorist of the existence of a 'group mind' - a theory which emanated, initially, from Hobhouse, MacIver and LSE :

> In his own day, Durkheim's theoretical writings were regarded by most critics as embodying an unacceptable metaphysical notion of the 'group mind'. More recent sympathetic accounts have largely dispelled this sort of misinterpretation, but have supplanted it with one which places virtually the whole emphasis upon Durkheim's functionalism. . . . Durkheim always emphasised the crucial significance of the historical dimension in sociology, and ...an appreciation of this leads to a quite different assessment of Durkheim's thought from that which is ordinarily given. Durkheim was not primarily concerned with 'the problem of order' but with the problem of 'the *changing* nature of order in the context of a definite conception of social development.(Giddens, 1971: ix)

Giddens, of course, was not the only sociologist between 1950 and 1970 to attempt to install Marx, Durkheim and Weber as sociology's 'founding fathers'. Others, both at home and abroad, including Aron (1965, 1967), Nisbet (1967) and Fletcher (1971) did the same, but each included a number of other thinkers, among whom were Comte, Spencer, Le Play, Tocqueville, Tönnies, Pareto and others. It has been suggested, in fact, that the impact of CMST has been negative as well as positive; that as well as establishing Giddens's sociological reputation, it has had the effect of

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28 This clichéd phrase describes the essence of Giddens's story, which is that Durkheim and Weber began their careers against the background of a world already substantially altered by the existence of Marx (see Giddens, 1971: xiv)

severely circumscribing sociology's intellectual heritage (Cohen, 1989: 3; Poggi, in Clark, Modgil and Modgil, 1990: 13; Kilminster in Bryant and Jary, 1991: 80).

Giddens, Parsons and Environment

Giddens did not, in CMST, take issue with Parsons's exclusion of heredity and environment as significant factors in sociological analysis, or explicitly 'correct' his supposed misinterpretion of Durkheim - at least as regards Durkheim's social morphology or his conception of the relations between humanity and nature. His *stated* intention was to rescue Durkheim as an historical thinker, and from his association with the 'unsound' theory of a 'group mind' (1971: ix). Parsons had argued that if either Malthusian or Darwinian arguments were accepted (especially the latter), the logical outcome was that 'environment' became all important as the deciding factor in evolution. Rational and voluntaristic social action thereby lost all potency as a force either for the achievement of individual ends, or for social change:

> Precisely insofar as this biologizing tendency, which in fact took primarily the Darwinian form, gained ascendancy there was an abandonment of the utilitarian position in favor of radical anti-intellectual positivism. In so far as the conditions of the environment are decisive it does not matter what ends men may think they pursue; in fact the course of history is determined by an impersonal process over which they have no control . . . . Even though rational action might have, empirically, a place as one mode of adaptation to the environment, the point is that it falls out of the general framework of the theoretical system altogether and becomes a contingent phenomenon, an unimportant fact in the strict sense. (Parsons, 1968a [1937]: 112-113)

As both Parsons and Giddens correctly noted, Durkheim was ambivalent - to say the least - about his 'biologizing' of the causes of the division of labour (Parsons, 1968a [1937]: 320-324; Giddens, 1971: 78-79). Moreover, Parsons avoided what might have become an issue concerning sociology's 'scientific' status (associated above all with Darwin's success in creating a 'unifying' theory based on the discovery of new 'empirical' facts), as a result of the exclusion of heredity and environment, by addressing the epistemological difficulties associated with a 'scientific' theory of (subjectively motivated) human action (1968a [1937]: 20-27), and by considering the

actor, not as a concrete organism acting in a natural environment, but as an 'ego' or 'self', inside a concrete 'body' which forms part of the conditions of action, motivated toward certain 'ends' (ibid: 43-51). Thus, by the time Giddens wrote, neither issue was any longer important (1971: x). As far as environment was concerned, neither Giddens nor, probably, any of his contemporaries in Britain at that time, was equipped by training to single out and develop this issue.

Giddens has not, of course, ignored 'environment' completely. He could hardly have dealt with such a huge range of theories in his subsequent work, while avoiding the issue. Nevertheless, where 'nature' or 'environment' does enter his work, it has taken the form of 'humanized nature' (Giddens, 1993 [1976]: 156). Although Giddens speaks of humanized nature as 'the interchange between human activity and the natural environment' (ibid.), this interchange, for him, has been essentially bound up with the ways in which human beings 'render the natural world "intelligible"' (ibid: 85).

> The intelligibility of nature and natural events is accomplished by the construction and sustaining of frames of meaning from which the interpretative schemes whereby everyday experience is assimilated and 'handled' are derived. . . . The difference between the social and natural worlds is that the latter does not constitute itself as 'meaningful': the meanings it has are produced by human beings in the course of their practical life, and as a consequence of their endeavours to understand it or explain it for themselves. Social life - of which these endeavours are a part - on the other hand, is *produced* by its component actors precisely in terms of their active constitution and reconstitution of frames of meaning whereby they organise their experience. The conceptual schemes of the social sciences thereby expresses a *double hermeneutic*. . . . (Giddens, 1993 [1976]: 85-6)

Thus, for Giddens (at least up to 1976), we can never understand nature, or appreciate it as a thing in itself, we can only 'humanise' it, by assigning to it meanings it does not, of itself, have. Giddens, like Hobhouse before him, has been primarily concerned with the role of human agents in creating their own social life.

Giddens and Hobhouse Compared

Giddens's theoretical creation - structuration theory - attempts to overcome the historical problem of the action-structure dualism in social (as well as sociological) theory. Using the now famous concept of the 'duality of structure' in which the 'structural properties of social systems are both medium and outcome of the practices they recursively organise' (1984: 25), and in which 'the moment of the production of action is also one of reproduction in the contexts of the day-today enactment of social life' (ibid: 26), Giddens's main point is that 'lay' actors (agents), in the course of living their day-to-day lives, not only routinely invoke and draw upon the societal structures that both constrain and enable them, but that in doing so they actively reconstruct, or reproduce, such structures.

Giddens and Hobhouse: Agency over Structure

Giddens defines societies, or social systems as 'the patterning of social relations across time-space, understood as reproduced practices' (1984: 377). The structural elements which surround us are 'virtual', conjured into existence anew each time we presume their existence in the enactment of our everyday lives. They constrain us, because they consist of systems of rules (only analytically separable from resources), but they also enable. We do not blindly internalise social rules, in the manner of an over-socialised Parsonian individual, but engage with them reflexively: we are not 'cultural dupes', at the mercy of fixed and impersonal forces. On the contrary, although no single agent or group of agents can control society or the direction of change, we each, through our life-political choices, as agents, decide 'about how (as individuals and as collective humanity) we should live' (1994: 15). As Hobhouse put it: there is, in society

> . . . no superhuman monster but simply human beings, human minds and human bodies, human will and passions, in interaction with one another and the physical environment . . . . What seems to be the blind march of events is the net result of the operation of millions of minds working . . . each on its own lines for its narrow end . . . . Hence though every individual of the mass is intelligent, the mass as a whole may be called blind, for no intelligence guides it as a whole.(1966a [1924]: 325-6)

Neither Giddens nor Hobhouse denies the existence or importance of structural elements or social institutions in the enactment of day to day social life, but for each it is agency which is paramount - a point which requires further discussion, for there are marked similarities in the way each conceptualises the human agent. Giddens's reification of the agent is more marked than Hobhouse's, through his insistence that structures have no existence independent of agents, and his more explicit consideration of the ways in which they enable as well as constrain. It is interesting to note that in spite of the prior concern with agency, both distinguish a whole complex of ways in which the concept of structure may be used, from rules routinely invoked in everyday life, through more explicit or codified sets of rules, to the principles of organisation which govern entire social systems. Giddens's discussion of structures, structural properties and structural principles in *The Constitution of Society* is obscure and difficult to follow, perhaps indicative of a more complex conceptualisation than Hobhouse's relatively lucid account of 'institutions' in *Social Development*, but it is not difficult to find parallels.

Giddens and Hobhouse: 'Social Structure' or 'Institutions'

Hobhouse identified three different types of social 'institution':

> . . . (1) recognised and established usages governing certain relations of men, (2) an entire complex of such usages and the principles governing it, and (3) the organisation (if such exists) supporting such a complex. (Hobhouse, 1966a [1924]: 49)

These types do not, of course, perfectly correspond to Giddens's concepts of structure as 'rules and resources recursively implicated in the reproduction of social systems' structural properties as 'structured features of social systems . . . stretching across time and space', and structural principles as 'principles of organisation of societal totalities. . . involved in the overall institutional alignment of a society of type of society' (1984: 376- 377). Yet both recognise that the structural or institutional features of social life operate on different levels, from the established uses or rules which govern everyday life, up to the overall principles of societal organisation. The latter, Hobhouse

suggested, may be embodied in the political principles of the state (if there is one), and constitutes the authority on which rests the 'common rule' of the 'community', though as he points out, the constituency in whom the 'authority' to rule is invested will not - except in the case of 'very democratic countries' - be identical with, or express the will of, the whole community. As an example, he cited (in 1924) the domination of the German people by the Kaiser, and argued that it was absurd to make the entire people answerable for the War (1966a [1924]: 50-51). Giddens (1984: 28-31) argues that institutions of different forms are always an expression of inequalities of power; that domination is the very condition of establishment of *structures* of signification, because 'the normative elements of social systems are contingent claims which have to be sustained and made to count'. Furthermore

> Normative sanctions express structural asymmetries of domination and the relations of those nominally subject to them may be of various sorts other than expressions of the commitments those norms supposedly engender. (1984: 30)

Both Giddens and Hobhouse, then, recognise that social structures or institutions operate at both the level of everyday life, and at the highest level of abstraction, as embodied in the principles of societal organisation. Each also recognises that structures (can) reflect inequalities of power and the capacity of some agents to make their claims 'count' over others, and do not necessarily involve moral or other commitment on the part of 'subject' agents. Giddens appears to be less sanguine about the possibilities for 'true' democracy than Hobhouse was, as a result of his insistence that domination is an inevitable feature of the very creation, and maintenance of structures. Yet his conceptualisation of agency and his insistence that all agents always retain some power (as 'transformative capacity') to make a difference, combined with his optimistic assessment of contemporary social trends - even the very concept of 'structuration' itself - is indicative of his conviction that social life is on the way to becoming more, rather than less, 'polyarchic'.

Giddens and Hobhouse: Unconsciously Motivated Reflexive Agents

All human agents, says Giddens, know a great deal about what they do in the course of their day to day lives, and routinely monitor not only their own activities and those of others, but also the social and physical settings of activity. Reflexivity operates in two out of three levels in his stratified model of personality. Much day-to-day activity draws on 'practical consciousness', a sort of implicit knowledge that actors have of why they do things and of the conditions under which they do them, though if asked they may not be able to formulate these explicitly. Practical consciousness is reflexive to the extent that 'people pay attention to events going on around them in such a way as to relate their activity to those events' (1984: 44). Discursive consciousness, also frequently implicated in the activities of day-to-day life, is the term Giddens uses to refer to knowledge that can be explicitly formulated by agents. Both practical and discursive consciousness are distinct from the unconscious, which relates to 'modes of recall to which the agent does not have direct access because there is a negative 'bar' of some kind inhibiting its unmediated incorporation within the reflexive monitoring of conduct and, more particularly, within discursive consciousness' (1984: 49).

Following Freud, Giddens argues that the unconscious is the seat of human motivation, and operates as an unacknowledged causal condition of action. Motivation generates definite interests via the maintenance of ontological security, and via routinization is immediately relevant to the reproduction of structure (1993 [1976]: 134-5).

Hobhouse's account of agency, like Giddens's, includes both a higher or reflexive component, and an underlying psychological 'motivating' mechanism. Where Giddens refers to the unconscious or unacknowledged condition of action in relation to the maintenance of ontological security, Hobhouse speaks of root-interests. Where Giddens speaks of motivation, Hobhouse uses the term 'Will'.

Hobhouse suggests that all human action, including ethical or moral behaviour has a 'psycho-physical' basis in certain fundamental root interests or needs (1913: 170). These are not simply primitive impulses towards survival of self and offspring. They

contain a whole complex of interests related to the maintenance of both self and society, and cannot be simplisticly separated into egoistic and altruistic sentiments. Root interests endure throughout life, governing the individual's many different reactions to the changing situations of everyday existence, even though they may be unconscious or simply unacknowledged. The need to satisfy the root-interests leads to the formation of stable community life via the formation of moral rules and social tradition (1913: 169-203; 1966a [1924]: 145-175). Moreover, root interests are the source of what Hobhouse refers to as 'Will', which is 'founded on an enduring interest, directing action to that end or system of ends in which that interest is satisfied' (1966a [1924]: 142).

For both Hobhouse and Giddens, the existence of this underlying psychological mechanism which leads to the routinization of everyday life poses a problem in respect of social change, for if there is a deep psychological interest - of which we may not even be aware, in the maintenance of custom, tradition, habit or routine, how can change occur at all?

Both attempt to solve this problem in several ways. Giddens uses the reflexivity of agents, in conjunction with conceptual devices such as fateful moments, de-traditionalisation, the over-coming of compulsive behaviours through the reflexive project of self, and the return and resolution of existential moral dilemmas previously 'repressed' by modernity (1991b). Hobhouse counts among the root-interests those of constructiveness or creativeness, and cognition - thereby creating a deep psychological motivation towards self- and social- knowledge and development. At another, fully conscious and reflexive level, lies the continuing evolution of mind and personality.

> . . . [T]he emergence, clarification and harmonisation of root interests is the development of mind. The permanent cause of true development is the inherent energy of mind itself operating from every living individual as a distinct centre, and always in relation to a physical environment. The conditions physical and social thus laid down are not the causes of development, but rather constitute the problem which mind has to solve. The particular form which social life assumes is to be understood as the adjustment which mind developed to a certain point is able to effect with the conditions of its life (1966a [1924]: 174-5).

Since mind is continually evolving, the conditions (the physical and social environment) of social life perpetually change. Root-interests will conflict with one another under all conditions except an 'ideal' perfect development of personality. Moral rules and social customs become inappropriate as circumstances change.

Two concrete examples of the way Hobhouse dealt with change help to illustrate the point. In the first, he was concerned with the origins of custom, and the inequalities of power expressed in custom or tradition as 'structure' ('institutions'). In the formation of custom, 'the stronger party will get the best accommodation, and when circumstances change old customs may be a serious obstacle to adjustment'. Change occurs through the actions of individuals seeking their own ends within the constraints imposed by custom. People do not blindly obey the social rule. Rather, they 'squeeze it a little, this way or that. They 'try it on'.' In this way individuals engage reflexively with social rules, which are given a 'critical examination' leading to resolution through change (1966a [1924]: 46-7).

This example shows us that Hobhouse was perfectly aware of two problems with his concept of agency with which Giddens has also grappled. One is simply that 'rules' express asymmetries of power between agents (Giddens 1993 [1976], 1981, 1984). The second is that agents' 'rationalization' of their conduct may not necessarily correspond to the real reasons for action - an appeal to moral rules may cover amoral self-interested actions (1984: 3-6). Agents' 'motivational' commitment to a particular social order does not necessarily imply moral commitment (1993 [1976]: 135).

In the second example, Hobhouse dealt with the situation of disjunction between morality and changing individual and social needs. This situation could occur because moral rules took on the character of tradition and were not only passed down through the generations but could also 'crystallise into precepts arrogating to themselves a supernatural sanction'. Though he did not use the phrase 'religious fundamentalism', it is apparent that Hobhouse was referring to something similar, when he wrote that such tradition is 'retrogressive' when it 'obstinately maintains' its own 'absolute validity and fixity' even against the possibility of wider and more complete

forms of life (1901: 350) Again we can find the parallels in Giddens (1991b, 1994), where the concept of fundamentalism, as a refusal of critical engagement with tradition, is one of the obstacles to the emergence of 'dialogic democracy' in a global order.

Riding the Juggernaut Towards Global Utopia

For Hobhouse, as for Giddens, society - the milieu in which minds communicate - both shapes and is shaped by the actions of individual minds, themselves continuously modified both by self-reflexivity, social 'structure', and interaction with others (Hobhouse 1966a [1924]): 178; Giddens 1984: 25).

According to Hobhouse, there is a contradiction in the fact that the more mind develops (as the motor of social development), the more a common will (the expression of the common-interest of humankind) is expressed in the conditions of social organisation. The more the community grows in both size and complexity, the greater is the pace of change, which in turn confounds the expression of the common interest in the form of the realisation of a common will. Hobhouse writes that development 'does not defeat itself but it does continually engender new difficulties requiring a still higher development [of mind] to grapple with them'(1966a [1924]: 191).

> Human history is created by intentional activities but is not an intended project; it persistently eludes efforts to bring it under conscious direction. However such attempts are continually made by human beings, who operate under the threat and the promise of the circumstances that they are the only creatures who make their 'history' in cognisance of that fact.(Giddens 1984: 27)

Thus no single individual can understand the totality, and unintended consequences follow intentional action. But Hobhouse suggested that two directional forces or interests were discernible among the apparently drifting mass of individuals: general ideas about 'national well-being'; and 'large interests appealing definitely to certain classes or sections'. These two influences 'originate and maintain political parties', to the extent that the direction of change, in so far as it is discernible at all,

may seem to be quite opposite to the emergence of international harmony (1966a [1924]: 191-8). In view of these entrenched interests of more powerful agents, against the disorganised mass of less knowledgeable, less powerful minds, it is surprising perhaps that he continued to believe in the emergence of a universal humanitarian spirit. Giddens too, has made much of the negative (as well as the positive) implications of nationalism (1985: see particularly, p.218), and has extensively analysed the conjunction of capitalism with the nation-state system (1981, 1985). Yet he continues to assert his belief that even the weak 'always have some capabilities of turning resources back against the strong' (1981: 62).

In the 'Late Modern Age', Giddens says, the fragmented, powerless, uncertain and commodifed agent begins to reflexively re-connect with some of the basic existential questions sequestered by abstract systems. The mechanism is a psychological one - agents made anxious by life in an internally referential world in which there are enormous manufactured risks and no certainties, searching for solutions via psycho-analytic (and other) therapy, self-help manuals, and even works of sociology. The realisation that the personal is political, the emergence of life politics and the New Social Movements, all point in a positive direction in the context of globalisation. We should not underestimate, Giddens says, the difficulty of resolving moral dilemmas in a post-traditional global order, yet the tone of his analysis remains both individualistic and optimistic. Though he formally rejects both evolution and teleology in social theory, his terminology is revealing when he speaks of 'powerful influences' or immanent institutional trends towards polyarchy and the growth of citizenship both within and between nation-states (for example,1994: 248; 1991a: 163, 167).

Ian Craib has commented on Giddens's 'increasing tendency towards assertion rather than argument' (1992: 183). His concept of the double hermeneutic, which posits the notion that there is continual 'slippage' between the lay meaning of concepts and their sociological sense, and his insistence on sociology's role as social reflexivity, both point to Giddens's underlying conviction that sociological knowledge (his own in

particular) can help us on the right path to Utopia (1984: 374; 1994: 250). Similar tendencies are apparent in Hobhouse (1966a [1924]: 325-6).

Hobhouse's account includes much talk of the (potential) emergence of a common will, while Giddens often seems more concerned with the proliferation of obstacles to consensus. Yet these differences should not blind us to their fundamental identity. Though the disciplines of psychology and the psycho-analytic movement were barely established in Hobhouse's time, his solution is fundamentally identical:

> ....the last enemy that man shall overcome is himself. The internal conditions of life, the physiological basis of mental activity, the sociological laws that operate for the most part unconsciously, are parts of the 'environment' which the self-conscious intelligence has to master (1901: 403).

Hobhouse and Giddens: Sociology and Contemporary Politics

Human beings are intrinsically social. The assertion that an unconscious, unrealised or unacknowledged psychological mechanism operates to sustain social life is, therefore, surely correct. And just as both Hobhouse and Giddens recognise this identity of interest in maintaining the social, each also recognises our differences, our individuality, our cleverness. We are not cultural dupes, but satisfy our most basic needs in very individual ways.

Hobhouse believed that though it was not possible or desirable to force people to be good, it was both possible and desirable to create social institutions which, while enabling autonomous choice, would also encourage them to choose what was socially just and morally good (1901: 351-7; 1966a [1924]: 300). Similarly Giddens (1994), advocates generative politics which will enable agents to make the autonomous choices which will prevent things from going wrong, in opposition to the traditional welfare system which picks ups the pieces when disaster (unemployment, ill-health) has already occurred.

> If good government, among other objectives, is about the pursuit of happiness, it certainly has to be connected with the psychic states of its citizenry.... Policies which sustain or create networks of social interaction can provide conditions for the mobilising of psychic

> development; the support of self-help groups of a diversity of kinds can play an important role... (1994: 187)

In this manner, Giddens and Hobhouse solve the old chicken and egg question concerning the casual primacy of either agency or structure. Both insist upon the primacy of the agent, while simultaneously advocating structural changes which encourage the agent to choose, in the conviction that, in the end, agents will choose what is socially just.

Thus, the bulk of Giddens's sociology since 1971 has been consistent with the sociological tradition which began, in Britain, with Leonard Trelawny Hobhouse. Hobhouse, of course, was not just a sociologist, but was highly regarded as a political theorist by his contemporaries (for example, Ruggiero, 1927). Even today, when his sociology is generally disregarded, Hobhouse has retained his reputation as principal exponent of 'New Liberal' politics (Meadowcroft, 1994). Moreover, as Collini (1979: 172) has shown, he constructed his sociology as a more or less deliberate attempt to provide 'scientific' or epistemological foundations for his 'new' liberal theory.

In Giddens's work, Hobhouse's conception of the developing self-conscious 'mind', has become the 'reflexive' self. These conceptions are very similar, and though they are not identical, they are sufficiently like one another to enable a realistic comparison. For both Giddens and Hobhouse, the knowledgable, reflexive, moral and social agent is at the centre of both social and political theory, a concern that is consistent with the liberal belief in the importance of 'character' (Freeden, 1978: 170-178; Bellamy, 1992).

In his more recent work, Giddens has begun to address environmental issues. In doing so, he has incorporated some new concepts, without abandoning any of the earlier ones. In view of the close resemblance of structuration theory to Hobhousian theory, and since Hobhouse deliberately excluded environment as a significant factor in social life, it is entirely reasonable to question the load-bearing capacity of Giddens's theory in respect of environmental issues. Giddens's treatment of environmental issues is examined in the next, and final chapter.

Chapter 5.

Anthony Giddens as Environmental Sociologist

Introduction

Giddens's incorporation of environmental issues is a significant British contribution to a much wider international development, in which the 'natural' environment, excluded from sociology for most of this century, is becoming a focus of both research and theory, not just among those who subscribe to Catton and Dunlap's New Ecological Paradigm, but across the whole spectrum of more 'traditional' approaches to sociology. Recent debates among environmental sociologists, however, indicate that this incorporation of environment by 'traditional' approaches, has not been entirely straightforward. These debates focus on two inter-related problems. The first is the extent to which, in the course of its development, environmental sociology has become subject to the same problems that beset the discipline as whole (Buttel, 1987). The second is to do with the adequacy of different sociological approaches to the environment (Dunlap and Catton, 1994)

Buttel, for example, reviewing the progress of environmental sociology, in the decade since its establishment in the late 1970s, suggests that while it has failed to fulfil its 'founders' early hopes for the foundation of a 'new' sociology (e.g. a New Ecological Paradigm), it has succeeded in becoming a recognised speciality area, or sub-discipline within the discipline as a whole (1987: 466). In doing so, however, it has become subject to the same problems of fragmentation that beset the rest of sociology. Following Giddens (1979), Buttel characterises these problems as hingeing on various dualisms: structure versus agency, nominalism versus realism, materialism versus idealism, and methodological precision versus substantive importance (Buttel, 1987: 484). From this point of view, he argues, a major failing of the theoretical core of

environmental sociology - the 'New' Human Ecology - is its neglect of issues to do with subjectivity and agency (ibid.).

Catton and Dunlap, the two sociologists whose work lies at the 'core' of the theoretical core of environmental sociology, echo Buttel's assessment of the development of environmental sociology. Moreover, they see the incorporation of environmental issues by 'traditional' perspectives as a promising development, citing the valuable contributions of several British (as well as American) sociologists. 'The eventual merging of these theoretical and empirical efforts', they suggest, 'promises to yield important advances in understanding the nature of societal environment relations' (Dunlap and Catton, 1994: 15). Significantly, Catton & Dunlap mention Benton (1989), Dickens (1992), Jones (1987) and Newby (1991), while omitting to mention Giddens, though it is hardly likely that they have failed to come across his work.

In spite of their optimistic assessment, however, Catton and Dunlap remain sceptical about the capacity of some 'traditional' perspectives to enhance the sociological understanding of environmental issues. In particular, they point to the limitations of a social constructivist approach for dealing with 'big' issues such as Global Environmental Change (GEC). Because the 'factual' or 'scientific' status of GEC remains a matter for dispute, Catton and Dunlap argue, a social constructivist approach (which might, for example, aim to uncover or examine the social processes by which an environmental problem comes to be defined as problematic) may lead to the neglect of their societal causes, consequences and amelioration. Worse, a social constructivist approach runs the risk of falling into an extreme relativism, with the result that environmental issues come to be seen as social constructions with no 'real' basis (1994:21-23).

This raises again the question of the adequacy of sociological accounts of social reality, discussed above in Chapter 1. There it was argued that the success or failure of different accounts of social reality may be as much the result of non-intellectual factors, as their adequacy. Sociology is more than just a collection of concepts, theories or ideas. It is also its embodiment in academic institutions, and, as such, is no

more immune from external social, economic or political conditions than other institutions. Nor are its practitioners any more immune from the same exigencies and contingencies than 'ordinary' people, either personally or professionally. Social location, personal ambition, personality traits, likes and dislikes, and political allegiances are just as much a part of everyday life for sociologists as for 'lay' agents. The establishment and development of sociology as an institution has been bound up with all of this, as well as with the development of sets of ideas or of ways of interpreting the world. Thus, the particular accounts of social reality which are now seen to be constitutive of the discipline are not necessarily those that are more adequate in terms of their conceptualisations of the inter-relationships between human societies and their 'natural' environments.[1] On the contrary, while the ideas and theories which have become 'institutionalised' during the course of sociology's history, by becoming part of academic institutions *may be intellectually self-evident*, they are intellectually self evident only within the confines and constraints of a dominant (hegemonic) political ideology or value system.

These days, when sociology has become an accepted and (more) acceptable subject, it is, of course, possible for more than one theoretical account of social reality, and for a wide range of research interests, to co-exist. They do not all, however, command equal interest, equal attention, equal institutional and financial support, or an equal number of citations and printed pages. Thus, theoretical hegemony within the discipline can both co-exist with and mirror to a significant extent political hegemony outside it. In a worst case scenario, professional sociologists have been compared to the 'enterprise commonly known as the oldest profession', selling their authoritative accounts of social reality to those who command political, civil, military and economic power (Nicolaus, 1972). This is a caricature, of course, but it is not wholly without truth. Some sociologists and some sociological perspectives do become central, both within the academy and, perhaps more importantly, outside it.

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1 In Geddesian terms, some of these accounts might be categorised as 'survivals'.

The central importance of Giddens's work has been signalled by the publication of no less than five volumes of appreciation and critique in the four years around 1990 (Cohen, 1989; Held & Thompson, 1989; Clark, Modgil & Modgil, 1990; Bryant and Jary, 1991; Craib, 1992), as well as by a huge number of journal articles which, over a period of years, have discussed more or less appreciatively or critically almost every aspect of his work. There are too many of these to list here, but their authors include: Bryan Turner, 1992; Roland Robertson, 1992; Ulrich Beck, 1992b; Jary and Jary, 1995; Alan Warde, 1994; Scott Lash, 1993; Nicos Mouzelis, 1989; Gregor McLennan, 1988; Derek Layder, 1985; Nigel Thrift, 1985; and Paul Bagguley, 1984.

For a sociologist, Giddens's rise to fame and pre-eminence has been spectacular. After leaving Leicester in 1969, Giddens took up a lectureship at Cambridge, acquired his doctorate on the basis of his already published work in 1974, and in 1985 was appointed Professor of Sociology there, becoming head of the new Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (Bryant, 1993: 7). In the same year he was a co-founder, with John Thompson and David Held, of Polity Press, which rapidly became one of the 'leading publishing houses in the social sciences' (ibid.). He was awarded an honorary doctorate by Salford in 1993, at which time his published work numbered 26 books and over a hundred articles (ibid.). Soon afterwards, Giddens nailed his political colours to the wall, by joining Tony Blair's 'New' Labour party (Observer, 8.12.96). In the wake of the publication of *Beyond Left and Right* (1994) Giddens was one among a group of intellectuals to whom Blair turned in his search for the 'big idea' (Baxter, 1995). He has recently been appointed Director of LSE (Thompson, 1996). Blair has become Prime Minister.

The move to LSE will tie Giddens even more closely to the centres of power, both nationally and internationally. Even before his move to LSE, and his committment to Blair, he was among those who submitted written evidence to the Labour Party's Commision on Social Justice, set up by John Smith during his short leadership (Report of the Commision, 1994: 404). The 1995 Report of the Commission on Global Governance, *Our Global Neighbourhood*, acknowledged more LSE-connected

individuals than individuals from any other single academic institution, internationally. These included the (then) Director, John Ashworth, as well as Fred Halliday, John Harriss, John Hobcraft, Ioan Lewis, and Paul Taylor. Meghnad Desai and Paul Redfern, of The Centre for Global Governance (located at LSE), were also acknowledged. [2]

In the light of Giddens's central importance, both politically and academically, the question of the adequacy of Giddens's account of social reality, especially as it relates to environmental issues, becomes extremely important. Has he, in spite of his similarities with the 'founder' of the British tradition, Hobhouse, succeeded in creating an account of social reality that is adequate in respect of environmental issues?

Giddens as Environmental Sociologist

Giddens incorporated environmental issues, initially, via his critique of Marx's concept of exploitation in the first volume of *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (1981), though the discussion is brief and undeveloped. Giddens's next discussion of environmental issues, in volume two of the 'contemporary critique', *The Nation State and Violence* (1985), focuses on the role of environmentalist movements for the mitigation of the exploitation of nature, though this a somewhat minor theme of that book. Environmental issues move to the centre of Giddens's work in *The Consequences Of Modernity*. There, they are seen both as a major *consequence* of human activities with respect to the transformation of nature, and in *causal* terms, as a major determinant of human action to the extent that they contribute to the underlying psychological constitution of agents. Humanly created risks, in the context of a generalised awareness of their existence and intractability, threaten the ontological security of agents, creating a situation where the capacity to act is perpetually

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2 Compare this figure with the 5 Harvard academics acknowledged by name, 2 from the University of Cambridge (Asha Patel, Marc Weller), and 1 each from Oxford (Raymond Plant), Manchester (Peter Dicken), Reading (John Dunning), Sussex (Paul Streeten). Overall, individual academics from U.S. Universities received the most acknowledgements, with academics from British Universities in second place.

threatened by anxiety and radical doubt, which must therefore be 'bracketed' by the agent. Thus, Giddens, in common with some other contemporary sociologists - most significantly Ulrich Beck - approaches environmental issues via the concept of risk.

There are, then, two separate 'moments' in Giddens's treatment of environmental issues. His work can be divided into an early phase up to 1990, and a later phase, from 1990 to the present. These are dealt with in turn, below.

The Environment in Giddens's Work Before 1990

Giddens's treatment of environmental issues up to 1985 is examined here via Goldblatt's recent critique (Goldblatt 1996). This serves several purposes. First, the very existence of a substantial critique highlights the extent to which Giddens's work has been taken seriously *as environmental sociology*. Second, it establishes the context in which Giddens later utilises Beck's work, by highlighting reflexivity and democracy as central themes of Giddens's earlier sociology. Third, it illustrates how a critique of Giddens formulated from an 'eco-system' perspective fails to hit the mark, by making assumptions about Giddens's own theoretical orientation which may not in fact be warranted. Fourth, it brings into relief the issue of the fragmentation of environmental sociology following its co-option within the mainstream.

Goldblatt is keen to ascertain, with some precision, the direct and indirect or structural causes of environmental degradation. His major criticism of Giddens is that he does not develop potentially useful themes in his work to this end. Giddens's incorporation of environmental issues remains, in the final analysis, concerned above all with the impact of high consequence manufactured risk on the consciousness of agents, and the consequences of this for contemporary social systems. As such, it remains firmly embedded within a perspective concerned with only one side of the society-nature interaction. And as Catton and Dunlap point out

> Understanding the human dimensions of global environmental change necessitates study of societal-environmental interactions, including a balanced examination of the impacts of humans on the environment as well as the effects of ecological constraints on human societies.(1994: 7)

Goldblatt's Critique of Giddens

In his first volume of *A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism* (1981) Giddens suggests that Marx's social theory is inadequate in contemporary terms because he adopted an instrumental attitude to nature, which was to be mastered and subordinated to human purposes. This means that his theory cannot cope with the idea that the natural resources from which humanity produces the material means necessary to survival are finite. Though it is through the relations of production under capitalism that resources are exploited as if they were in never-ending, there is little indication that socialism (at that time still actually existing in the Soviet Union) fares any better in this respect. Nor can it cope with the idea of nature as a potential part of a meaningful human existence (1981: 245-6)[3]. Giddens suggests that some of his own ideas are superior in this respect, in particular 'those bearing on the commodification of time and space, the dissolution of the differentiation between the city and the countryside, and the prevalence of "created space"' (ibid., 246).

In his critique of Giddens's approach to environmental issues, Goldblatt (1996) suggests that although these ideas are useful ones, Giddens does not follow them up. He also suggests that Giddens's work undergoes a shift in emphasis between 1985 and 1990 - from seeing environmental problems as associated with the conjunction between industrialism and capitalism, to laying the blame firmly at the door of industrialism alone. Yet although Goldblatt's discussion of the ways in which Giddens's work is adequate or inadequate in respect of environmental issues is extremely useful, as well as being sensitive to the lack of clarity in Giddens's arguments, a different interpretation is possible. According to this, it is likely that Giddens's failure to develop

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3. This latter point, of course, is arguable. Howard L. Parsons (1977). argued that resource constraints were very important for Marx and Engels in their attempt to discredit the classical political economy of Malthus and Ricardo. Dickens (1992) has shown that Marx was very much aware of the importance of the relationship between humanity and nature, which is alienated under capitalism. Giddens himself, in CMST (1971: 13) discusses Marx's concept of alienation, including the idea that capitalism alienates humanity from nature or species being.

these concepts is due first of all to the fact that until 1990, environmental issues were not of any special significance in his work.

Secondly, if Goldblatt is correct to point up Giddens's shift towards seeing industrialism rather than capitalism as a basic causal factor in the transformation of nature, it seems likely that this is associated not only with the nuclear accident at Chernobyl, which highlighted a fact of which he was already aware - that industrial state-socialist societies were equally destructive in terms of the environment, but also with the collapse of Soviet Communism, which led to the propagation, by some on the Left as well as the Right, of the idea of the 'death of socialism'. That Giddens, who has been intermittently engaged in a critical debate with the ghost of Marx since 1971, has been influenced by this suggestion is evidenced by his discussion of Socialism in *Beyond Left and Right* (1994).

Giddens did, as Goldblatt suggests, initially posit a generic association between capitalism and industrialism (Goldblatt 1996: 19; Giddens, 1985: 143-5), but the function of this was to allow him to pursue his arguments with respect to the discontinuous nature of modernity and was entirely unrelated to his conceptualisation of the causes of environmental problems. When he spoke of 'capitalist societies' he meant this to be read as 'industrial-capitalism' (1985: 145). Capitalism emerged on the basis of certain other developments, which had nothing to do with industrialism - 'the formation of frameworks of law, fiscal guarantees and an increasingly pacified social environment allowing non-coercive economic exchange to flourish' (1985: 288-9). This was the basis of his insistence that the expansion of surveillance is of fundamental importance in the development of 'modernity'. It is the expansion of surveillance, in conjunction with the dynamism of capitalism which drives industrialism and in doing so increases the capacity for both surveillance and institutional reflexivity, which gives modernity its distinctive character.

Citizenship, Surveillance, and Democracy

When Giddens initially discussed the emergence and importance of environmentalist movements in capitalist-industrial nation states, his major theme, therefore, was to

highlight the importance of the extension of surveillance in the development and maintenance of nation states. An examination of his approach to environmentalist movements shows him doing exactly what Goldblatt says that he has not done - developing his concepts of the commodification of time and space, the dissolution of the relations between the city and the countryside and the concept of 'created space'. The reason that his analysis is unsatisfactory for Goldblatt is that his sociological agenda is different from Giddens's. As an adherent of an eco-system perspective (a 'New Ecological Paradigm'), he is concerned with theoretical and empirical issues to do with actual and potential environmental degradation, whereas Giddens, at that point, was primarily concerned to show that the expansion of surveillance is not a wholly sinister or totalitarian phenomenon but is, on the contrary, intricately tied to an expansion of citizenship rights and democracy in the context of the modern nation-state. Environmentalist movements are just one among other Social Movements used by Giddens *as an illustration of his main point.* Thus, although it is hardly surprising that Goldblatt cannot find what he wants to find in Giddens's theory, this does not means that the concepts are left undeveloped. Rather, they are developed in a particular direction.

Giddens suggests that there are inherent connections between the nation-state and democracy, since increased surveillance necessarily involves a much closer relation between the governed and the governors (1985: 201-2). Moreover, this relation is one of reciprocity rather than merely of repressive control, because any services provided by the state of necessity involve the accumulation of information about the population they serve. In turn, subject populations must recognise sovereignty as legitimate authority, which is achieved partly via the dissemination of nationalist sentiments (as a constructed history or 'historicity') using the same technologies through which surveillance is increased.

> Nationalism is the cultural sensibility of sovereignty, the concomitant of the co-ordination of administrative power within the bounded nation state. With the coming of the nation-state, states have an administrative and territorial unity which they did not possess before. This unity

> cannot remain *purely* administrative however, because the very co-ordination of activities presumes elements of cultural homogeneity. The extension of communication cannot occur without the 'conceptual' involvement of the whole community as a knowledgeable citizenry.(1985: 219)

The greater the degree of reciprocity involved in the relations between sovereign states and the 'subject population', the greater the possibilities the 'dialectic of control' offers subordinate groups to influence rulers (1985:202). Thus the growth of citizenship goes hand in hand with development of nation-states.[4]

This is the context in which Giddens introduces not only environmentalist movements, but also the labour movement and the peace movement, and various civil rights movements (1985: 310-325). If sovereignty within nation-states is inherently bound up with both the expansion of surveillance and the expansion of citizenship via reciprocity and the dissemination of nationalism as historicity, it is simultaneously bound up with

> ...*the emergence of tendencies and pressures towards democratic participation.* In each of its aspects surveillance promotes the possibility of the consolidation of power in the hands of dominant classes or elites. At the very same time, however, this process is accompanied by counter-influences brought to bear in the dialectic of control.(1985: 314 emphasis in original)

The City and the Countryside

Giddens expands upon his notion of the pre-modern city as a 'power container', in order to demonstrate the discontinuities between pre-modern and modern social forms. Whereas in the pre-modern city the administrative reach of the state was low, largely confined to the 'subject populations' of cities, leaving those outside the city with a relatively greater degree of autonomy of action (since they are not dependent on those inside the city for their livelihood), the expansion of surveillance means that the nation-state takes over the role of the city as a 'power container'. Unlike the city, however, it has administrative capabilities which extend over the entire population

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4 Giddens's discussion of citizenship, of course, draws on his reading of Marshall's (1950) *Citizenship and Social Class* (see in particular, Giddens, 1985: 202-209).

within its boundaries, something which is made possible by a number of other related developments which emanate from his three other 'institutional clusters'. These developments include

> . . . the mechanisation of transportation; the severance of communication from transportation by the invention of electronic media; and the expansion of the 'documentary' activities of the State, involving an upsurge in the collection and collation of information devoted to administrative purposes. . . . the second and third of these have increasingly merged in the twentieth century as electronic modes of the storage of information have become more and more sophisticated. Moreover, electricity becomes increasingly involved in the means of mechanical propulsion. . . . Each represents a mode of biting into time and space, providing the means of radically increasing the scope of time-space distanciation beyond that available in class-divided societies. (1985: 173)

Giddens discusses the extent to which capitalism, industrialism, surveillance and the control of the means of violence, singly or in combination, produce the technologies of surveillance, thus contributing to the time-space convergence which permits 'immediacy of time contact across indefinite spatial distances' (1981: 40). This culminates in the emergence of a global system of nation-states which maintain peaceful relations both inside their borders and between them (1985:172-97 and 287-93).

The Urban as 'Created Space'

Other consequences, however, include the spread of 'urbanism' beyond the confines of the city, as a 'created environment' and the sequestration of experience (1985: 192-4). Thus in spite of regional differences both between different locales within nation-states and between nation-states themselves, in terms of the division of labour, and variable concentrations of population, which may be (but are not necessarily) culturally, ethnically or linguistically distinct,

> ... the transformation of nature is expressed as commodified time-space; as such it is the *milieu* of all social action, no longer a distinct physical entity and social sector within a broader societal totality.(1985: 193)

In one sense, Goldblatt is quite correct to point up the difficulties and confusions inherent in this position, especially since, as he suggests, Giddens has made a case for the central significance of urban sociology for the discipline as a whole which he then fails to follow up (Goldblatt, 1996: 52-5). However, this issue is only important if one is particularly interested in the relationship between 'urbanism' and the causes of environmental degradation, which Giddens, here, is not. Urbanism seems to be conceptualised as the homogenisation of the relations between humanity and nature, in which the cultural boundaries between social activities in city and countryside are dissolved, and has an entirely different purpose. On the one hand, it forms part of his arguments for the expansion of the administrative reach of the state, and the discontinuous nature of modernity. On the other hand it is connected with his model of the psychological constitution of the agent, which is for the most part methodologically bracketed in *The Nation State*, a text which is mostly concerned with an institutional or structural analysis rather than with agency. The connection with agency is to do with the sequestration of experience (which Giddens suggests is one form of regionalisation), as a factor in the dissolution of tradition and the fragile nature of ontological security of the agent under conditions of modernity.

> In the contexts of the modern state, the routinised character of most day to day life is not grounded in the moral schemes of tradition. In such circumstances ontological security is tenuously founded psychologically, depending on the enactment of 'morally meaningless routines' protected by the sequestration of events and experiences which might otherwise threaten it. Where moral meaning has retreated to the margins of the private and the public, the communality supplied by national symbols... provides one means of support for ontological security, particularly where there is a perceived threat from outside the state (Giddens, 1985: 218).

Environmentalist movements, as Giddens employs them in *The Nation State*, exist as a counter-balancing force for the limitation or mitigation of the wholesale 'transformations of nature' brought about by industrialism (within the bounds of capitalist-industrial nation state). He depicts them as essentially backward-looking movements often grounded in a romantic view of nature, oriented towards the

'recovery of attitudes to the natural world associated with pre-modern forms of society' (1985: 315). As such, although Giddens does not elaborate the point until later, in *Modernity and Self Identity* (1991), environmentalists are concerned with the re-moralisation of the humanity/nature relationship. Environmentalism in Giddens's work develops from this portrayal of the environmentalist movement, into one of the ways in which individuals can more firmly re-establish their 'ontological security'. At no point does Giddens indicate a personal or political affinity with these ideals. By 1994, we find him launching into a swingeing attack on what he sees as inconsistencies in green ideologies which reinforces this definition of environmentalism as backwards looking and romantic (1994: 199-228)

Although Goldblatt's critique is well-founded in one sense, therefore, there is another sense in which it entirely misses the point, since Giddens is not primarily concerned in *The Nation State* with the causes and consequences of environmental degradation except in so far as the 'transformations of nature' (of which degradation is only one aspect) impacts firstly upon social systems, and secondly upon agents. He later takes up and develops his concern with the implications of the 'socialisation of nature' for agents, in *The Consequences of Modernity* and *Modernity and Self Identity*, but this is *after* his contact with Beck's work. And although Goldblatt is disappointed by Giddens's neglect of urban sociology in the face of his claim that it is central to the sociological enterprise as a whole, it is not implausible to suggest that Giddens, having dissolved the distinction between urban and rural life, can justifiably claim to be doing urban sociology without further reference to a distinctive urban sphere.

All that is implied by Giddens's insistence on urban sociology is the homogenisation of cultural experience: it no longer makes a difference whether the spatial location of the agent is urban or rural. Moreover, this point is, for the most-part, well-founded. Giddens insists on the interdependence of capital and labour in modern nation-states. Rural dwellers, in pre-modern times, he suggests, were not dependent on those inside the city for their means of subsistence. Relationships were confined to a fairly limited exchange of goods or services. This is no longer the case.

All lives are dominated by commodifed clock-time, irrespective of whether one gets up at six to milk cows or to drive to an academic department. A farming community may exist up to its knees in mud, but even this direct contact does not bring it any closer to traditional attitudes to 'nature'. Farming tends to be dominated by the 'urban' sphere - by the requirements of, for example, the big supermarkets and banks. If supermarkets demand particular types of produce, that is what the farmer must, of necessity, produce. It is no longer, for most farmers, a case of producing for subsistence and selling the surplus, but of producing according to the demands of the market. Farmers may consume the milk produced by their dairy herd, but the primary purpose of milk production is not consumption, but sale, and the dairy farmer's existence is entirely dependent on compliance with both the requirements of the 'market' and the 'rules' (relating to hygiene, health, quotas and so on) formulated by faceless expert systems. Moreover, cattle often do not mate 'naturally' but are artificially inseminated (a form of genetic engineering, or *domestic* rather than *natural selection*) by the representative of an expert system of eugenics. Farmers have shopped around, and decided whether to breed for meat or for milk, so that the process involves a financial calculation as well as the application of both scientific knowledge and industrial technology. The *Supersires Dairy Bull Directory* for 1996, for example, is a splendid advertisement for the inter-connections between capital and labour, rural and urban life, and scientific knowledge, industrial technology and 'nature'. As an organisation linking all the above, 'Supersires' are

> ... permanently engaged in an unrelenting quest to source superior bulls - bulls with the ability to produce cattle which combine production potential with the type required by discerning dairy farmers....every year we set out to offer a range of sires of overall higher genetic merit than that of the previous year...

The traits for which farmers may to choose to breed through the purchase of appropriate sperm are numerous, and include variable chest widths, body depths, rump widths, rump angles, foot angles, udder depth and support, teat position and length, temperament, milk production, milking speed and ease of calving. Interestingly, in

view of the current popularity of 'natural' products in supermarkets, the word 'natural' appears nowhere in this directory. The photographs depict cattle as sleek and shiny 'supermodels', labelled in terms of their 'uses' for the farmer, and marketed on the basis of superlatives - 'stylish', 'sharp', 'excellent udder conformation', and 'comes with the reputation of being able to turn a bad cow into a good one!'. This example provides a picture of rural life far removed from any traditional image of old-fashioned folk eking out a simple but satisfying existence in harmony with nature. Recent developments in genetic cloning are likely to further remove from such 'natural' activities as farming any remnants of such a traditional or harmonious relationship.

From the vantage point of an 'advanced' industrial-capitalist society, then, it seems difficult to argue with Giddens's interpretation of the dissolution of the rural-urban divide: the routinised experience of day-to-day life may involve a different set of social roles and activities depending on the exigencies of geographical locale and occupation, but the institutions of capitalism and industrialism, including institutional reflexivity, expert systems and the rules and resources upon which agents draw, are all-pervasive in the advanced economies of the Western nation-states. Moreover, as Geddes suggested (Geddes and Thomson, 1931: 1387-1392), it is the mechanical, scientific urban thought-patterns and ways of living that have absorbed the 'vital' and 'rustic' rural rather than the reverse.

The Importance of Politics

Giddens's and Goldblatt's different approaches to environmental issues arise from their different *political* as well as theoretical perspectives. In many respects these may be incommensurable. Giddens is primarily interested in the expansion of political, social and cultural *autonomy* for individuals via democracy or 'polyarchy', while Goldblatt is interested in the *constraints* that result from the fact of our ecological dependence and interdependence. Moreover, Goldblatt's concern extends to the unequal distribution of the degradation of global environments (1996: 64-5), where Giddens's (1985) analysis of nation-states was concerned primarily with inter-societal relations as time-space relations involving surveillance and reflexivity, but not with the impacts of the

advanced societies' economic activities on the environments of other nation states. That this is so is evidenced by the fact that in spite of his earlier acknowledgement of the global scope of modern capitalism (1981: 168), he later asserts that

> There is no *prima facie* reason to suppose that the forms of interdependence which have been most prominent at particular phases in the development of the world system have been those that have most favoured the position of the economically advanced societies.(1985: 171)

This statement is only explicable from a standpoint that is peculiarly ethnocentric and unconcerned about environmental degradation. For while there may be no *prima facie* reason to suppose that the economically advanced nations benefited from their contact with the less developed, there are plenty of *empirical examples which show that they did, and do benefit* - and which illustrate the extent to which the development of a world system has been disadvantageous for many. It is hard to interpret as beneficial the impact of international interdependence on the indigenous inhabitants and environment of Africa, or on the Native Americans whose populations were decimated by the diseases of the white settlers who appropriated their lands, even where they did not directly slaughter them. In the recent past too, the inhabitants and environments of both Bhopal and Seveso have suffered from the economic activities of more wealthy countries. The 1976 accident at Seveso occurred at a pharmaceutical plant belonging to a subsidiary of the Swiss firm Hoffman La Roche, which produced one of the ingredients of a potent chemical weed killer. At the time, there was a world shortage of the chemical, due to the closure of a production plant in Britain, itself the result of an accident. No official action was taken for some time after the accident at the Seveso plant, which released a cloud of poisonous gas, with the result that an estimated 70,000 animals either died or had to be slaughtered. Although approximately 30,000 people were affected directly or indirectly by the disaster, the long term impact is unlikely to be discovered, since the Italian government had no money to carry through its plan to monitor the health of some 100,000 individuals (Elsworth, 1990: 411-417).

The 1984 accident at Bhopal occurred at a factory owned by Union Carbide Limited, a subsidiary of a American owned transnational corporation. Estimates of the number of people killed by the accident varied between 1,755 and 2,500. Adverse reactions ranged from temporary blindness and burning lungs to permanent disability and affected 200,000 more, some of whom were still receiving treatment as much as a year afterwards (Elsworth, 1990: 60-64). In both accidents the activities of 'economically advanced' societies had severe impacts on less economically advanced societies, while remaining unaffected themselves.

The approaches of Goldblatt and Giddens are fundamentally different. Where Goldblatt is particularly concerned to develop an eco-system perspective which acknowledges the importance of political, economic and cultural factors, to be applied to a critique of industrial societies with state-socialist governments, as well as to liberal-capitalist societies, in their destructive consequences for specific environments, it is fair to say that Giddens - at least up to 1990 - was not. His project, while it has the merit of being grounded in both historical research and contemporary concerns, is specifically grounded in a theoretical critique of Parsonian functionalism and Marxist theory. This does not mean that it has no practical relevance for environmental sociology, merely that it is addressed primarily to questions of the relations between human agency and social structure, rather than to question of the inter-relations between human agency, social structures and the 'natural' environment.

The Environment in Giddens's Work After 1990

A shift occurred in Giddens's thinking about environmental issues between the publication of *The Nation State* and the appearance of *The Consequences of Modernity* in 1990. Two factors are likely to have been significant. The first of these is the impact of the nuclear accident at Chernobyl in the USSR in April 1986, and the second is his reading of the work of Ulrich Beck.

Comparison of Giddens's use of risk with Beck's *Risk Society* thesis indicates that Giddens has taken up only certain of Beck's ideas to add to what Craib (1992) has

called his 'theoretical omelette'. Of these, the only one that is wholly new in Giddens's work is 'risk', to which he gives a causal role in the psychological constitution of agents. The other themes, including reflexivity and the importance of the extension of democracy for the resolution of environmental problems, are features of Giddens's earlier work, which are developed in new ways following his contact with Beck.

Environmental issues as 'risk' become central for Giddens only after his contact with Beck's work, which is sufficiently similar in other respects for Giddens to be able to import the concept into his own work without much in the way of substantial change. This interpretation of the incorporation of 'risk' into Giddens's work should not be understood in a cynical sense as suggesting a leap on to a lucrative publishing bandwagon in the wake of the success of Beck's book, or as an accusation of plagiarism (although Giddens does draw more extensively on Beck's work than he formally acknowledges).[5] Rather, the necessity of engaging theoretically with environmental issues is likely to have been associated, for Giddens, as for many of us, with a growing awareness of both the *potential* for ecological disaster and its *reality*, via the occurrence of a series of large-scale technological disasters between 1976 and 1986. Giddens's post-Chernobyl contact with Beck's work, combined with the fact of some basic and essential similarities between his theoretical position and Beck's, is likely to have been at the root of his enthusiasm for 'risk'.

The Consequences of Modernity began life as a series of lectures given by Giddens at Stanford University in California in 1988 (Giddens, 1991: v). Although a small number of British social scientists had an interest in 'risk' at that time (see, for example, work cited by Adams, 1995, among which Irwin's (1985), *Risk and the*

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5 In their introduction to *Risk Society*, Brian Wynne and Scot Lash refer to the parallels between Giddens's work and Beck's, and stress the extent to which this development has occurred *independently*. Yet while it is certainly true that there were many concepts in Giddens's work which pre-figured the approach he has taken since *The Consequences*, it must remain a matter for speculation as to whether, in the absence of his contact with Beck, Giddens would have developed these concepts in the particular manner he has.

Control of Technology is a specifically *sociological* contribution),[6] interest in risk was more highly developed in the United States. Buttel's (1987) review of the current state of development of environmental sociology, attributes the development of interest in technological risk and risk assessment, as a branch of environmental sociology, to accidents at Three Mile Island, Love Canal 'and related instances of technological hazards and the politicisation of risk assessment' (Buttel, 1987: 480). He cites a significant quantity of work on risk, either published or presented at conferences during the early 1980s by authors including Allan Schnaiberg, A. Mazur, D. Nelkin and M. Pollack, Mary Douglas and Aron Wildavsky, V.T. Covello, J.F. Short Jr., Thomas Dietz and R.W. Rycroft, C. Perrow. None of this work, or indeed Buttel's own review, is referred to by Giddens.

The accident at Three Mile Island, Pennsylvania occurred in March 1979 (a date which, as Buttel suggests, is significant; the foundation of the American social science journal *Risk Analysis* in 1980 illustrates the point). Large scale environmental disaster was only narrowly averted after several features of a newly commissioned nuclear reactor malfunctioned simultaneously, releasing a quarter of a million gallons of radioactive water into the surrounding environment. It was later estimated that the plant had been a mere sixty minutes from core meltdown. Three Mile Island was closed after the accident, but in spite of mass public protest was re-opened in October 1985, when it suffered two further leaks of radioactivity during its first month of operation. (Elsworth, 1990: 438-442).

Chernobyl, which occurred a mere six months later during the course of an 'experiment', provided the American population with a dramatic example not just of what might have been - but also of what *might be* at Three Mile Island. The Chernobyl plant continued to release radioactive gas for ten days after the accident, and many thousands of people were evacuated from surrounding areas. It has been suggested that fatalities might eventually total 24,000 people over fifty years (Elsworth: 1990:

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6 The sociology of risk, according to Watts Miller (1996: 110-111), actually dates from 1897. Durkheim's *Suicide* according to this interpretation, offers 'an internalist sociology of risk'.

77-91). An American Scientist who visited the USSR in the aftermath of Chernobyl made a public announcement in June 1987 to the effect that the probability of a core meltdown in the United States in the next twenty years was 'about fifty percent' (Robert Gale, cited in Elsworth, 1990: 81).

It is, therefore, extremely likely that Giddens's American lectures, in which 'risk' is elevated to the position of a central causal element in the psychological constitution of the agent, were delivered to an audience in which the psychological condition he believes it engenders - 'angst' or 'dread' - was highly developed, at least for that particular moment (although its precise nature may have been different from Giddens's description of it (see Craib's critique: below p.240)). This appears to reinforce yet again the importance of the relationship between the immediacy of 'external' events and the reception and popularity of sociological theories.[7]

The concept of risk, as developed in *The Consequences of Modernity*, draws heavily on aspects of Beck's *Risk Society* thesis. *Risk Society* did not appear in English translation until 1992, although it was published in German in 1986 as *Risikogesellschaft*. Although Giddens is fluent in German, as indicated by his (1990) references to the German edition of *Risk Society*, and the many references to the German editions of the works of Marx and Weber in his early work (1971), it seems that his earliest contact with Beck's work was via his 1987 article 'Anthropological Shock: Chernobyl and the Contours of the Risk Society', which appeared in English in the *Berkeley Journal of Sociology*. Again, we should note in passing that Chernobyl, which differed significantly from other 'disasters' (including Three Mile Island, Seveso and Bhopal) in its *global* implications, *is certain to have been a root cause of the early*

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7 Of course, one could argue that TMI, Chernobyl, Bhopal and other 'disasters' were all *media events* and that many of the 'agents made anxious by them would simply not have known of them in the absense of their construction by T.V. crews and news reporters. One might also argue that, in the absense of 'scientific' knowledge of the possible consequences, anxiety might not have been so acute. In this case the psycho-sociological theory of risk anxiety might never have been constructed. The 'construction' of an event is a difference of scale, rather than substance. An 'event' that is socially constructed is nevertheless real.

translation of this article. None of Beck's earlier work achieved the international success of *Risk Society*.

The Risk Society as a Consequence of Modernity: Ulrich Beck

In the late twentieth century, Beck suggests, not only is the character of modernity altered, but so also is the political agenda. The big political, and therefore sociological, question - which used to be concerned with the just distribution of socially produced wealth - is today a question concerned with the prevention, minimisation, dramatisation and channelling of socially produced risks (1992: 19). Even this most basic introductory assertion begins to mark out Beck's difference from Giddens, who continues, in *The Consequences*, to address the 'problem of order' (Giddens, 1991a: 14). *Risk Society*, which constitutes an attempt to map out the contours of this changed agenda, while keeping the question of the ecological crisis at its core, is correspondingly broad in scope and does not just address questions associated with the qualitatively altered risks produced by industrial society, but connects them to whole range of questions more traditionally associated with sociology - class, work, the family, gender relations and the self.

Beck's core proposition is that in industrial society the production of wealth is accompanied by the production of risk. The reduction of human need has involved a corresponding production of hazards which are qualitatively different from all previously experienced hazards (1992: 19). These risks are ecological risks which are socially manufactured, global and invisible. Invisibility has especial significance for Beck, who uses radioactivity as a paradigm example of manufactured risk. Because we cannot seen what threatens us, scientific knowledge takes on a new significance. Global ecological risks are peculiarly open to both scientific and social definition and construction. This is the concept of risk - manufactured, global, high consequence, invisible - adopted by Giddens (1991a:124-5).

Modernisation risks, says Beck, are at first unequally distributed; those most afflicted will be those at the bottom of the class structure. Eventually, however, risks come to have a levelling or democratising effect. Because they are 'piggy back'

products consumed in the air we breath or the food we eat, sooner or later even those at the top of the class structure become unable to avoid them. (Beck, 1992:35-42)

> The circularity of this social endangering can be generalised; under the roof of modernisation risks, *perpetrator* and *victim* sooner or later become identical (1992: 38).

Beck suggests that this endows ecological hazards with a novel political power. The boundaries dividing classes and nations dissolve, as does the artificial separation between nature and culture. Yet because ecological threats such as the poisoning of the food chain and the pollution of our water supply are at least initially invisible, they first have to be acknowledged or perceived. Several contributory factors operate in the perception of risk, most of which have to do with the operation of 'science'.

Reflexivity

Scientific knowledge and technologies are not only the root causes of ecological problems, but are also a source of solutions, as well as the medium through which risks become visible and hence open to definition. Beck identifies two phases in the development of the Risk Society: primary and reflexive 'scientization'. In the first phase scientific knowledge is applied to nature, people and society. In the second, confronted with its own products and mistakes (often the result of over-specialisation), scientific scepticism is applied to science itself. Science and counter-science - the use of scientific methods to challenge or demystify scientific pronouncements of the degree of hazard presented by a particular production process or technology, are both vital elements in the perception of risk. Yet it is the very success of science that leads to this challenge to its authority, as the application of scepticism undermines its claims to certainty or truth.

Risks which are scientifically reflexive are also politically reflexive. A risk which comes into the public sphere via a newspaper headline, Beck suggests, is politically reflexive, to the extent that it has the capacity to change the political agenda of the centre. Politics in industrial society has concerned itself with democracy and the

rights of citizens, while science and technology has to a great extent been immune from political intervention.

Ecological risks, though, are only one side of the risk society. Changes in other spheres which are occurring simultaneously, overlap with and impact on individual risk positions. If one consequence of the transition to the risk society for individuals, is the creation of a generalised anxiety, traditional ways of dealing with that anxiety have become inadequate. The 'traditional' institutional forms of industrial society - the nuclear family, social class and gender roles, are dissolving under the impact of reflexive modernisation. The development of social security systems has produced social relations which have a high degree of stability at the same time as they remain unequal in terms of distribution, which has in turn enabled a surge of social individualisation, so that class commitments come to seem irrelevant. In addition, the geographical mobility demanded by industrial society has turned out to be incompatible with stable attachments to community or place and family and kin.

> The tendency is toward the emergence of individualised forms and conditions of existence, which compel people - for the sake of their own material survival, to make themselves the centre of their own planning and conduct of life. (1992: 88)

Under conditions of reflexive modernisation, everyone has to choose their own life course - creating a reflexive biography, which has the effect of shifting the problems created by 'the system' onto individuals so that failure is always *personal* failure.

The centrality of reflexivity in Beck's Risk Society thesis reflects a corresponding feature of Giddens's earlier work. Reflexivity as a property of agents is a central tenet of structuration theory (1976, especially 120-24; 42-3). Surveillance appears in 1981, and develops in subsequent work. In 1984, Giddens, writes of 'reflexive self-regulation', causing a 'feedback effect in system reproduction', distinguishable from 'homeostatic loops' on the basis that it is a deliberate attempt to control system reproduction, rather than the outcome of unintended consequences (1984: 375; 376). In 1985 reflexivity becomes 'reflexively-monitored system

reproduction' involving surveillance, and the emphasis is on control (Giddens, 1985: 178). By 1990 'institutional reflexivity' is the constant examination and alteration of social practices in the light of new knowledge, and Giddens's emphasis is upon constant change (Giddens, [1990] 1991a: 38). For Beck, reflexivity means that modernity is 'becoming its own theme' (1992: 19). Giddens later introduces the idea that modernity is 'internally referential' (1991b: 150).

Anxiety and the Dissolution of Tradition

Beck's insistence on the dissolution of traditional forms of life under reflexive modernity, and the effects of this, to a great extent mirror Giddens's. The dissolution of tradition generates anxiety, according to Giddens, which can to some extent be countered by identification with symbols which promote community via national identity (1985, see above, p.224). He implies that environmentalist movements, as well as being an expression of the dialectic of control, have a similar function. Although the source of the anxiety, for Beck, is ecological risk primarily, rather than the dissolution of tradition (though it becomes coupled to this), the effects are identical: anxiety and a new search for new sources of security and identity. He suggests that 'risks experienced presume a *normative horizon* of lost security and broken trust' (1992: 28), and acknowledges the possibility that risk-anxiety can be 'easily' repressed by agents (ibid: 48-9), so that it is by no means clear whether, and what sort of, action might result from anxiety.

> ... [It] is still completely unclear how the binding force of anxiety operates, even whether it works. To what extent can anxiety communities withstand stress? What motives and forces for action do they set in motion? Will the social power of anxiety actually break individual judgements of utility? How capable of compromise are anxiety-producing communities of danger? In what forms of action will they organise? Will anxiety drive people to irrationalism, extremism or fanaticism? So far, anxiety has not been a foundation for rational action. Is this assumption no loner valid either? Is anxiety - unlike material need - perhaps a very shaky foundation for political movements? Can the community of anxiety perhaps even be blown apart by the weak draft of counter information? (1992: 48-9).

Thus, the anxiety that results from the existence of high consequence risks, in Beck's view, might be either repressed or successfully countered by the assertions of those who retain an interest in keeping things as they are, leading to more of the same - more industrial society, more reflexive modernisation, more risk-creation and more industrial-capitalist opportunities for risk-avoidance products (1992:224-8). Alternatively, the insecurity caused by risk-anxieties might result in the attempt at 'democratising' risks. This would entail bringing techno-scientific development under control of the political centre, through the establishment of an '*ecological variant of the welfare state*', with the attendant danger that it might turn out to be hierarchical, authoritarian, bureaucratic - in short a step in the direction of totalitarian rule by the political centre - a development both unlikely and undesirable (ibid.: 228-231). A better solution, for Beck, would lie in the recognition of the 'unbinding of politics' (the loss of function of the political centre). He would prefer to see politics differentiated into various institutionalised sub-political groups, established for the purpose of formalised social critique, which could then discuss the impact of, and alternative to proposed techno-scientific developments *before* such developments were even researched (ibid: 231-5)

Beck links the anxiety caused by the development of risk to the anxiety resulting from changes in the social structure. The New Social Movements, in his view, represent a response to both forms of anxiety.

> ...on the one hand the new social movements (ecology, peace, feminism) are expressions of the new risk situation in the risk society. On the other they result from the search for social and personal identities and commitments in detraditionalized culture.(1992: 90)

There is much more in Risk Society than this. In particular, Beck lays great emphasis on the decline in lay trust in expert systems, the separation of the political from the economic (which has co-opted institutionalised science), the increasingly redundant role of the political centre, and the role of sub-politics, including the environmental movement, in redefining the political agenda to address the problem of ecological risk.

Yet he remains cautious about the possibilities for positive change, suggesting that the most likely future is more of the same - more global, manufactured, high consequence modernisation risks, which spawn more risk industries in a spurious attempt to minimise, deny or deal with them.

Realism versus Constructivism

In spite of Hannigan's assertion that Beck 'contradicts himself', through his simultaneous insistence on the *socially constructed* nature of risk and on the *real* dangers they refer to (Hannigan 1995: 184), his somewhat apocalyptic tone leaves us with no doubt that he believes that 'modernisation risks' have an objective existence that is independent of our knowledge of them. He appears to be under no illusions with respect to the extent of the entrenched interests which continue to be dominant in contemporary society. Yet at the same time, his concluding question has a tone of cautious optimism:

> Behind the façades of the good old industrial society that are still being propped up, could it be that, alongside the many risks and dangers, forms of this new division of labour and power between politics and sub-politics are already beginning to stand out and be practised today? (Beck, 1992: 235)

Hannigan suggests that Beck's contradictory assertions are illustrative of a 'long standing tension' between the Human Exemptionalists and the New Ecologists, concerning 'the role of sociological analyst versus the role of environmental activist' (op cit.). Whatever the truth of this suggestion, the urgency of Beck's tone provides a welcome antidote to Giddens's ultimate conclusion, which asserts that there is no way out - we must simply accept, and learn to live with, the riskiness of risk (1994:249).

The Risk Society as a Consequence of Modernity: Anthony Giddens

In his book length critique of Giddens, published in 1992, Ian Craib suggests that *The Consequences* is 'significant not least because in this text, he takes up issues that are excluded by his theoretical system' (Craib, 1992: 106). Craib does not link Giddens's use of the concept of risk with his reading of Beck, which is not really surprising in

view of the fact that *Risk Society* did not appear in English until that year, by which time Craib's own book was complete, as well as the fact that Giddens's acknowledgement of Beck in *The Consequences* is minimal (three references in total - one short quote from the *Berkeley Journal* article, two references to concepts used in *Risk Society*: 'the end of the other' and 'socialised nature').

Much of *The Consequences*, in fact, goes over old ground. Giddens retraces briefly the 'shortcomings in established sociological positions' he has elaborated in earlier works (1976, 1981). He identifies the discontinuous character of modernity in the pace and scope of change and in the nature of modern institutions (1985), and proposes, in *The Consequences*, to discuss two aspects of modern institutions primarily: security versus danger, and trust versus risk.

In Giddens's earlier writing, security and trust were related to one another via the concept of motivation. In 1984 he approaches it via a discussion of the work of Erikson, and the development of basic trust in early infancy (1984: 51-60).

> ...the initial formation of trust occurs... against the background of diffuse anxiety, control of which suggests itself as the most generalised motivational origin of human conduct. (1984: 54)

The control of anxiety through the creation of a system of basic trust is the foundation of an agent's sense of 'ontological security', the maintenance of which, for Giddens, leads directly to the routinization of everyday life, and is thus implicated in the reproduction of structure.

> Ordinary day to day social life... involves an ontological security founded on an autonomy of bodily control within predicable routines and encounters. The routinized character of the paths along which individuals move in the reversible time of daily life does not just 'happen'. It is 'made to happen' by the modes of reflexive monitoring of action which individuals sustain in circumstances of so-presence. The 'swamping' of habitual modes of activity by anxiety that cannot be adequately contained by the basic security system is *specifically a feature of critical situations*. In ordinary social life individuals have *a motivated interest* in sustaining the forms of tact and 'repair' ...Tact is a mechanism whereby *agents are able to reproduce the conditions of 'trust' or ontological security within which more primal tensions can be canalized and managed.... [T]here is a generalized motivational*

commitment to the integration of habitual practices across time and space.(1984: 64 emphasis added)'

Security and trust are a central part of structuration theory. Risk and danger are the new themes that appear in *The Consequences* as symptomatic of the 'darker side of modernity' (1991: 7). They are not only here opposed to security and trust, but, as in Beck's book are made to perform as concepts through which the ecological crisis can be included in a substantive analysis of modern society.

Giddens takes off from familiar ground. Modernity's peculiarly 'dynamic' nature results first from the separation of time and space, and their recombination in precise time-space 'zones' (1981, 1984). Among other effects, this separation is the prime condition of a second cause of discontinuity: disembedding. Disembedding refers to the way in which social relations are lifted out of specific time-space locales under condition of modernity. Institutional reflexivity is a third causal factor. These three institutional features of modernity explain its similarity to a 'careering juggernaut' rather than a well-controlled car (1991: 53). Risk emerges as an unintended consequence of institutional reflexivity and is approached by Giddens in *The Consequences* via its relationship with trust in a de-traditionalising world.

In *The Consequences,* Giddens connects trust with expert systems and symbolic tokens (two major 'disembedding' mechanisms). The character of trust here appears to have changed in an important way, since it is not vested in another person or persons, but in the system's 'abstract capacities', most often on the basis of flimsy or inadequate knowledge (1991: 26-8). In spite of appearances, however, Giddens is keen to maintain his earlier understanding of the nature of trust. Following Luhmann, he argues that trust is to be understood in relation to risk, but where for Luhmann the term 'risk' implies an awareness of danger, a conscious weighing of alternatives, and an active decision to 'trust', for Giddens 'trust' is a more continuous, ongoing state of affairs, upon which a generalised awareness of risk impinges, resulting not in mistrust, but in the underlying feeling of angst or existential dread, akin to his earlier conception

of the diffuse anxiety which the development of basic trust overcomes (1991a: 30-32; 100). Giddens here defines trust in terms of

> ...confidence in the reliability of a person or system, regarding a given set of outcomes or events, where that confidence expresses a faith in the probity or love of another, or in the correctness of abstract principles (technical knowledge). (1991: 34)

Here is one source of Craib's anxiety about *The Consequences.* Giddens has clung to the centrality of trust as a condition of ontological security, even extending the importance of trust to agents' trust in the abstract systems of modernity. This is to misconstrue the nature of trust, Craib suggests, since it is possible for someone to be perfectly secure 'ontologically', yet to have a sceptical attitude towards abstract systems - or for the reverse to be true (Craib, 1992: 170-171).

According to Giddens, trust exists under condition of modernity in the context of a generalised awareness of the impact of human activity upon the material world where the transformative scope of that activity is vastly greater than at any time in the past. Because of this generalised awareness, 'risk' now replaces fate, as the calculated courting of (socially created) dangers which threaten desired outcomes. 'What is seen as "acceptable risk" - the minimising of danger - varies in different contexts, but is usually central in sustaining trust' (1991a: 35). Security is a situation where particular dangers are successfully counteracted or minimised, and is usually achieved (individually and collectively) through a balance of trust and acceptable risk.

In Modernity, where social relations have become disembedded from local contexts of time and place, relations of trust are a vital part of processes of the re-embedding of action in specific time-space locales. Giddens suggests that the re-embedding of disembedded social relations occurs at 'access points' in abstract systems where 'faceless commitments' (blind trust) become 'facework commitments' (trust based on co-presence) (1991a:87-8). Agents have a generalised motivational commitment towards trust in others, resulting from the development of basic trust in infancy, though the influence of the hidden curriculum in socialisation is also

important, since children are imbued with a sense of respect for scientific or technical knowledge of all kinds, which in adulthood co-exists with a pragmatic scepticism in an attitude of both trust and ambivalence (1991a: 88-90). This means that access points, where scepticism or ambivalence co-exist in tension with attitudes of trust, not only become 'acknowledged sources of vulnerability for abstract systems' but also for agents, who are unable to opt out of the institutions of modernity entirely (1991a:91-2).

The force of Craib's criticism becomes apparent, as Giddens develops his arguments concerning the relation between trust in both people and things and ontological security.

> Trust, ontological security, and a feeling of the continuity of things and persons remain closely bound up with one another in the adult personality. Trust in the reliability of non-human objects, it follows from this analysis, is based upon a more primitive faith in the reliability and nurturance of human individuals. Trust in others is a psychological need of a persistent and recurrent kind.(1991a: 97)

The agent who persistently worries about the threat of nuclear war becomes, according to this interpretation, abnormal, or ill. This is not the case because the threat is an imaginary one, but because it is not "normal" for an agent to be unable to block out such anxieties. The necessary basic dose of trust in infancy acts as an inoculation against the 'ontological anxieties to which all human beings are potentially subject' (93-4).

Trust, then, becomes a necessary prerequisite for the maintenance of both the agent and the social system. But if 'security' is obtained somewhere in the balance between trust and acceptable risk, this balance begins to break down in modernity, due to its 'dynamic' nature. Humanly created high consequence global risks have a vastly increased scope and intensity, which is different in kind from all pre-modern risks. The fact that many people are not only aware of the existence of this type of risk, but also aware of the limitations of 'expert systems' in terms of risk, has profound consequences for ontological security (1991a:131).

It is impossible to allow these risks to impinge too thoroughly upon our day to day lives, Giddens suggests. Indeed, the agent who does so is likely to be thought, and indeed *is*, according to Giddens's own account of what it means to be ontologically secure, 'disturbed' (1991a: 133). This is a dangerous position, since the implication that a failure to block out the anxiety caused by the threat of nuclear war (which Giddens himself acknowledges is *real*) amounts to mental illness could be taken as a licence for the treatment of opposition as deviance.[8] Yet as Craib points out, '*Ontological security is not the same as feeling safe*' (1992:176), and a failure to 'block out' the anxiety brought on by the threat of nuclear war or a nuclear accident may be a perfectly justifiable and 'normal' human response.

Anxiety is not the only result of high consequence risks, however. Agents are forced to acknowledged their lack of control, and a belief in 'fate' - the notion that *que sera sera*, reappears

> at the core of a world which is supposedly taking rational control of its own affairs. Moreover, this surely exacts a price on the level of the unconscious, since it essentially presumes the repression of anxiety. The sense of dread which is the antithesis of basic trust is likely to infuse unconscious sentiments about the uncertainties faced by humanity as a whole.(1991: 133)

Here is a second source of Craib's dissatisfaction with *The Consequences*. The re-appearance of 'fate', or the experience of modernity as a 'juggernaut' which we cannot control, appears to be at odds with his previous insistence on the knowledgeability of agents (Craib, 1992: 106). Craib's criticism has some force, which is easily seen if we juxtapose Giddens's insistence on structuration as the outcome of the transformative activities of knowledgeable agents with the image of agents who feel powerless, and are made anxious in the face of structural forces over which they have no control.

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8 The Criminal Justice Act, in fact, does treat certain forms of protest as deviance.

Risk and Structuration Theory

Giddens's incorporation of environmental issues as 'risk', then, remains firmly embedded within structuration theory, while at the same time introducing issues - society is like a juggernaut out of control - which appear to confound his previous assertions about the knowledgeability of agents and the 'virtual' nature of structures, which are perpetually open to the constitutive or transformatory activities of agents. By contrast, *The Consequences* argues that the existence of high consequence global risks causes a high level of anxiety, which, in order for the agent to be able to continue to act, *must be repressed.* Yet Giddens describes four adaptive reactions typically made by agents as a result of living with high intensity, life threatening, ineradicable risks: pragmatic acceptance, sustained optimism, cynical pessimism, radical engagement, or a mixture of these. In relation to these reactions Giddens discusses briefly a range of 'dialectically related frameworks of experience' (1991a: 139-149) which allow him to draw the optimistic conclusion that 'modernity's inherent reflexivity and . . . many opportunities for collective organisation within the polyarchic systems of modern nation-states' will lead to active engagement with, rather than a retreat from, risk (1991a:149). The forms of such engagement, at the level of the agent are later developed in *Modernity and Self Identity.* The long-awaited third volume of Giddens's contemporary critique of historical materialism, *Beyond Left and Right* (1994) is an attempt to develop a radical politics appropriate to this 'risk' society.

In these two later volumes, contrary to Craib's (1992: 180) assessment, in which he suggests that he has had to recognise the powerlessness of the agent, Giddens begins to reassert the importance of the transformative capacities of knowledgeable agents, who, provided with appropriate social and political conditions, will begin to respond in appropriate ways to the issue of the ecological crisis. His sociology can be seen, therefore, like Hobhouse's, as providing a foundation for a 'New' political theory. His status as environmental sociologist, in the final analysis, rests on the adequacy of his political solutions.

Political Solutions to Environmental Problems

In *Modernity And Self Identity* Giddens writes that to be 'ontologically secure is to possess, on the level of the unconscious and practical consciousness, answers to fundamental existential questions which all human life in some way addresses' (1991b: 47). These questions - to do with human mortality, relations between humanity and nature, and intersubjectivity, have been 'sequestered' or repressed by abstract systems. Yet in circumstances where the self has to be reflexively made, the fragility of an ontological security system constructed on the flimsy basis of an internally referential social system becomes transparent to the agent - creating a problem in respect of the 'authenticity' of self identity. Giddens insists upon the ways in which agents are enabled, in 'Late Modernity', to re-connect with basic moral or existential questions at 'fateful moments', as well as through sexuality, the reconstruction of tradition, the resurgence of spirituality (re-enchantment?), and New Social Movements. The only institutional or structural evidence offered at this point for 'the return of the repressed' is the shift towards 'decarceration' of both prisoners and the mentally ill (1991b: 202-208).[9] Giddens acknowledges the extent to which this can be seen as stemming from purely economic motives, but insists that it may also be seen as 'a means of encouraging "normal" individuals to face the potentially perturbing questions raised by those who fail to adhere to central norms governing social life', leading to the revelation of the contingent, fragile and possibly arbitrary nature of conventional ways of being (1991b: 204-5).

Widespread acknowledgement of the contingent status of social "normality" is a prerequisite for the emergence of life politics, defined as a politics of choice or 'life decisions' (1991b: 215). Life politics has implications at both an individual, and a

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9 As I write this, the British government has just purchased a 'prison ship' from the United States, in an attempt to deal with the problem of a rapidly expanding prison population. (*Guardian*, 12.03.97, p.1) In view of this, the suggestion that there is a trend towards decarceration (in Britain at any rate) looks a little dubious.

global level, in the inter-connection between 'personal lives' and 'planetary needs' (1991b: 217-223).

> A clear part of increased ecological concern is the recognition that reversing the degradation of the environment depends upon adopting new lifestyle patterns. By far the greatest amount of ecological damage derives from the modes of life followed in the modernised sectors of world society. . . . Widespread changes in lifestyle, coupled with a de-emphasis on continual economic accumulation, will almost certainly be necessary if the ecological risks we now face are to be minimised. (1991b: 222)

Giddens, then, is suggesting that, if they are to be found at all, solutions to environmental problems will be found in the emergence of 'life politics'.

Life Politics

In *Beyond Left and Right*, Giddens's first priority is the extension of democracy (Giddens 1994:124-133; see also Beck, 1992: 231-5, and 1995, in particular 180-4). Democratisation on its own, however, is insufficient, in view of the 'intrusive influence of inequality' (1994: 132). The redistribution of wealth and income, however, is not on Giddens's political agenda (ibid: 166). Democratisation requires a programme of emancipatory politics, in combination with the implementation of 'generative politics' as an aid to the expansion of 'life politics', thus creating the conditions under which agents are able to make (appropriate) life decisions and life style changes (1994: 15).

Giddens offers several examples of how generative politics might work in conjunction with life politics. The latter emphasises the importance of lifestyle change as a means of combating 'risk'. In the case of various cancers, this means choosing not to smoke, choosing to keep out of the sun, to eat particular foods, and to avoid toxic substances at work and at home (1994: 154). These examples are illustrative of Giddens's liberal perspective - they require very little in the way of policy at the level of the state, and much from the autonomous knowledgeable agent, who must exercise the capacity for rational choice. There is no suggestion that cigarette manufacture should be forcibly stopped, though Giddens does advocate a ban on advertising as a cheap and simple anti-smoking measure operating at the level of the state policy (ibid. 155).

Neither does he acknowledge the difficulties inherent in the unequal distribution of wealth with respect to the 'choice' of a good diet. Yet where the cheapest loaf of white sliced bread costs less than thirty pence in comparison to a pound or more for an organically produced wholemeal loaf, this issue has surely to be addressed. Structuration theory acknowledges the power differentials inherent in the unequal distribution of both authoritative and allocative resources, but Giddens's conception of life politics appears to leave open the question of how agents are supposed to choose to avoid toxic substances at home, when, first of all, they may have no way of knowing what toxic substances are contained in household products or food (or which toxins might be produced by combining different substances). Secondly, an agent might feel that any job - even if it involves working with toxins - is better than none at all, if the alternative is to deprive the family of other 'choices'.

At the level of policy Giddens suggests primary prevention - similar methods to those which have been useful in persuading people not to take up smoking could be used to change attitudes and social norms with respect to violent crimes or domestic violence; and secondary prevention would involve therapeutic help for victims of violence as well as for those prone to be violent. Finally, measures must be taken to respond to pathological behaviours, whether smoking or violence, once they have already occurred - as well as treating the effects of the behaviour, this means 'making sure that individuals subsequently alter their lifestyle habits' (ibid. 156). Giddens's examples are selective. Readers could be forgiven for wondering why he chooses to focus so heavily on smoking as risk, instead of, perhaps, on the lifestyle changes required for the avoidance of toxins at work. Could it be that this particular example, rather than any of the others, functions more efficiently to focus attention on the thing that Giddens want to focus on above all - the issue of autonomous choice? He stops short of recommending that car use should be legally banned from city centres, or that employers be required to stop using toxic substances in the workplace, or that food labelling should tell the consumer about potentially harmful ingredients, just as he stops short of the suggestion that cigarette manufacture might be prevented. Life style

change as a remedy for environmental degradation is to be largely the responsibility of the ordinary citizen.

Much of Giddens's discussion of environmental problems at a global level reinforces this point. The Brandt Report was wrong to suggest the transfer of funds from rich to poor countries, he says. An 'alternative' set of reforms is necessary, beginning from the developing rather than the developed world. Giddens betrays his ethnocentric bias here (see above, p.228). He postulates the need for a programme of alternative development which aims to prevent poor countries from modernising. Key words here are self help, self reliance, integrity, and responsibility (1994:159-162). This is a programme which appears to re-introduce the Classical Liberal idea of philanthropy as a duty, since it requires 'intervention from "big battalions" - states, businesses and international organisations' (1994:162). Alternative development for rich countries involves the attempt to bring rich and poor closer together without re-distributing wealth or income (ibid. 166)

It is perhaps surprising that Giddens's solutions say very little about capitalism or the activities of national or transnational corporations, or the relations between capitalist organisations and States, since the enemy, as he describes it, is 'productivism'. This is the 'ethos of industry' (ibid. 140) or 'continuous economic growth' (ibid. 163). Although he insists on the need for efficient use of energy and resources in production (ibid: 178), the primary focus is again on the agent, whose lifestyle must alter in order to appreciate the fact that money does not necessarily bring happiness. Closing the gap involves an 'effort bargain', rather than the redistribution of wealth, as the basis of a pact between rich and poor:

> A generative model of equality, or equalization, could provide the basis of a new pact between the affluent and the poor. Such a pact would be an 'effort bargain' founded on lifestyle change. Its motivating forces would be the acceptance of *mutual* responsibility for tackling the 'bads' which development has brought in its train; the desirability of lifestyle change on the part of both the privileged and the less privileged; and a *wide notion* of welfare, taking the concept away from economic provision for the deprived towards the fostering of the autotelic self. (1994:194)

Put in this way, it sounds as though the solutions to environmental problems lie wholly at the feet of individuals. The poor, at home and in developing countries, must choose to stay poor, while the rest of us must choose to take our bottles to the bottle bank, recycle our tins and plastic bags, and make a New Year's resolution to use the car less often!

Democracy and Corporate Power

Giddens is quite correct, of course, to insist on the necessity for lifestyle change, but his discussion of generative politics, life politics and notions of positive welfare as solutions to environmental problems is lacking in some basic respects. First, democracy (as he acknowledges) is hardly likely to be served by a continuation of inequality. Yet in refusing to address the issue of the radical redistribution of wealth - on both a national and a global level, Giddens ignores the possibility that environmental problems might not only be mitigated at the expense of social justice, *but that they might fail to be mitigated at all.* As Andrew Rowell (1996), and Stauber and Rampton (1995) have shown, transnational corporations can and do invest considerable time, money and personnel in the effort to discredit environmental activists and win the public over to their side.

Stauber and Rampton cite William Greider, whose (1992) book *Who Will Tell the American People? The Betrayal of American Democracy* describes how one public relations firm manufactures anti-environmentalist support, by telephoning ordinary citizens all over America and offering to write letters on their behalf in support of oil, chemical tobacco and pharmaceutical companies. The sophisticated level of the cynical manipulation of knowledgeable and reflexive agents by capitalist organisations, involved in such activities is strikingly revealed by the words of one public relations worker cited by Stauber and Rampton. In an address to a conference entitled 'Shaping Public Opinion: If You Don't Do It Somebody Else Will', John Davis of Davis Communications explained how his company manufactured an anti-environmentalist campaign:

> "We want to assist them with letter-writing. We get them on the phone, and while we're on the phone we say, 'Will you write a letter?' 'Sure.' 'Do you have time to write it?' 'Not really.' 'Could *we* write the letter for you?' . . . Just hold, we have a writer standing by".
>
> The call is then passed on to . . [an] employee who creates what appears to be a personal letter to be sent to the appropriate public official:
>
> "If they're close by, we hand deliver it. We hand-write it out on 'little kitty cat stationery' if it's a little old lady. If it's a business we take it over to be photocopied on someone else's letterhead. [We] use different stamps, different envelopes . . . Getting a pile of personalised letters that have a different look to them is what you want to strive for". (John Davis, cited in Stauber and Rampton (1995), 175)

This example illustrates the lengths to which multi-national corporations are prepared to go, *covertly*, to *manufacture* anti-environmental sentiment. Examples could be multiplied of the more *overt* use of unequal power and resources on the part of both multi-national corporations and States to repress environmental protest - even to the extent of using physical force. Most notably, Rowell (1996) points to the execution of Ken Saro Wiwa, the sinking of the Greenpeace ship Rainbow Warrior, and the violent repression of road protests.

Structuration theory acknowledges the importance of knowledge, and technologies of surveillance, as resources which, when unequally distributed, exacerbate inequalities of power, and allows some agents to exploit others. There is substantial and increasing evidence that such exploitation does occur. Yet Giddens chooses to ignore both this and Beck's anxiety that environmental issues as risk might simply be defined away by industry 'experts'.

Purdue (1995) in his account of the first UK National Consensus Conference on Plant Biotechnology in 1994, has shown how the conference format and discussions were defined and manipulated by 'experts', to the advantage of the biotechnology industry, who were revealed, in the conference's opening speeches, to have funded it for the purposes of correcting public misunderstandings about biotechnology, to educate the public to accept the ideas of experts and to facilitate the industry's momentum (Purdue, 1995: 172).

Giddens's insistence on voluntary life style change on the part of knowledgeable agents, then, blinds him to the importance of the superior capacities of corporations in terms of both allocative and authoritative resources, even though the principles of strucuration theory, in which his radical politics continues to be based, highlight the possibilities for domination and exploitation inherent in unequal possession of resources.

Individual Power and Consumer Choice

There is one other centrally important point connected with the question of unequal distribution. It is an issue touched on briefly by Beck in *Risk Society* (1992: 131-3),[10] one that is picked up by Goldblatt in his outline of his own theoretical position (1996: 188), and one that is discussed by Giddens in both *Modernity and Self Identity* and *Beyond Left and Right.* This is the issue of consumption.

Beck points to the ways in which individuals become increasingly subject to new forms of social control in conditions of reflexive modernisation. The process has been not only one of individualisation - but also of *standardisation*, so that individuals have less 'individual autonomous private existence' than before (1992:131). Beck's discussion is brief but informative: market dependency, mass consumption, television, even education are examples of institutional opportunities for new types of influence and control (ibid: 132-3)

> As a consequence the floodgates are opened wide for the subjectivization and individualisation of risks and contradictions produced by institutions and society. The institutional conditions that determine individuals are no longer just events and conditions that happen to them but, but also *consequences of the decisions they themselves have made*, which they must view and treat as such. (1992:136)

The result is that failure comes to be viewed as personal failure, even if is has institutional causes. Thus Beck acknowledges the ways in which 'choice', while not by

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10 Curiously, Beck does not discuss consumption in either of his subsequent publications: *Ecological Politics In An Age Of Risk* ([1988] 1995), *Ecological Enlightenment* ([1991]1995).

any means illusory, can be institutionalised and constrained, while simultaneously highlighting the ways in which the 'freedom to choose' functions to mask institutional or structural causes of individual problems.

Goldblatt points out the paradox inherent in the fact that material prosperity, which generates environmental politics in the first place, is simultaneously its greatest opponent.

> The kinds of changes in consumption and definition of well being required to bring western societies within the orbit of sustainability are both extensive in their coverage and intensive in their consequence. Everyone will be affected in such a transition. Negotiated social change of this form is an enormous political task. At the same time, the political and legal systems of capitalist societies are not neutral but structurally biased in their allocation of power to environmentally problematic interests. (1996: 188-9)

Radical changes in patterns of consumption are thus centrally important for the resolution of environmental problems, but the unequal distribution of power is inimical to such radical change in consumption patterns on the part of the wealthy.

In *Modernity and Self Identity*, Giddens acknowledges that capitalism is dependent on the consumption of commodities, but does not see commodification as too much of a problem. Capitalism commodifies (and is thus a form of sequestration or mediation of experience), but agents re-appropriate. 'Even the most oppressed of individuals' he suggests 'react creatively and interpretatively to processes of commodification which impinge on their lives' (1991b: 199). This is, of course, true, but while the capacity to create an individual style of dress from mass produced and marketed garments (ibid: 200) may illustrate the extent to which agents are knowledgeable and reflexive within the bounds of what is acceptable and available within a social system in terms of rules and resources, it does not suggest a radical change in patterns of consumption.

The entire thesis of *Beyond Left and Right*, on the other hand, is bound up with the notion of a change in patterns of consumption. Giddens's notion of a post-scarcity society, on the 'other side' of capitalism, owes much to the anthropologist Marshall

Sahlins who suggested that the so-called primitive societies were defined not so much by a paucity of goods as by a paucity of needs (Sahlins, 1972). Yet he stops short of any attempt to theorise need beyond the most fleeting of references to Maslow's (1962) hierarchy of needs (1994: 165-6), which leads him into a discussion of the importance of the need for self actualisation, above all. The road to self actualisation, according to this argument, lies in the psychological capacity of agents to overcome compulsions or addictions as the key to human happiness. It surely does not need to be stated, however, that when it falls below a certain level, consumption can and does impinge upon agents' capacity for self-actualisation. How much is enough? And how would a notion of sufficiency be sustained when those who are to be content with a sufficiency are daily confronted with the life styles of those who have more?

Are agents who have been persuaded into the culture of consumption by the 'magic system' of capitalist marketing (Williams, 1980); who have been manipulated until they can no longer tell the difference between 'true' and 'false' needs (Galbraith, 1958); who are caught in the confusion of a proliferation of messages about the real properties of the 'goods' they buy (Leiss, 1978) - really as knowledgeable as Giddens suggests? Perhaps they *are* knowledgeable, and reflexive, but *not quite so knowledgeable nor so reflexive* as the owners of capitalist corporations whose 'goods' they have little choice but to buy - not just for survival, but 'whatever the custom of the country renders it indecent for creditable people, even of the lowest order, to be without' (Adam Smith, 1776, cited in Schudson, 1984: 132).

Giddens does indeed acknowledge the problem of relative poverty - and its effects on the capacity to be a 'creditable' agent (1994: 98) - but his refusal to consider alternatives to capitalism, or to begin to work out a theory of 'need' (or of necessary consumption), severely limits his analysis in respect of social justice. Doyal and Gough (1991), whose vision of the good society as one that liberates through 'the optimisation of significant choice within and between cultural forms of life' appears to be very similar to Giddens's, argue that

> 'a belief in the existence of human needs in conjunction with a consistent belief in a moral vision of the good lends strong support for a moral code that the needs of *all* people should be satisfied to the optimum extent' (1991: 111).

Paradoxically, in view of the fact that their ultimate vision is similar, as are some of their premises (drawing on aspects of both liberal and socialist theory) and some of their conclusions about the nature of need, particularly their insistence on the centrality of autonomy as a basic human need, Doyal and Gough propose very different means for the promotion of optimal need satisfaction. *Radical redistribution is both desirable and necessary for global need satisfaction.* The theoretical and practical difficulties with this position are abundant, as they acknowledge when they point out that historical variations in social arrangements make it unlikely that optimal need satisfaction will be straightforward in practice. There is likely to be disagreement about the effectiveness of particular technologies, and appropriate social policies. Other problems arise from the recognition of resource constraints. Who is to get what when there is simply not enough to go around? This problem is presented as a fundamental conflict of interest between different groups, which is likely to be *exacerbated by existent inequalities in access to, or ownership of, resources.*

> . . .[O]ne open question is the extent to which people who are already privileged will be willing democratically to put the satisfaction of needs before preferences, and the extent to which it will be morally acceptable to reduce their autonomy through forcing them to do so in the name of the rights of the poor.(1991: 118)

Surely it is preferable to pose this as a problem for the optimum satisfaction of need, than to simply assume, as Giddens appears to do, that *all* self-actualised agents will develop this conviction of their own accord through the discovery of a set of universal values via 'life political' activities? Doyal and Gough acknowledge the importance of the extension of democracy for solutions to the problem of such basic conflicts of interests, which involves both a decentralisation of politics (akin to Beck's (1992: 231-235) 'differential politics'), *and* a strong central democratic state (Doyal and Gough, 1991: 119).

Both Giddens and Doyal and Gough discuss Rawls and Habermas *en route* (Giddens, 1991b: 213-4; Doyal and Gough, 1991: 120-141), yet where the former arrives at his theory of the emergence and centrality of 'life politics' in conjunction with the extension of democracy, the latter are led to propose that *the refusal to redistribute is morally indefensible*. They argue for the creation of an international need tax, within the developed nations, and suggest that 'the ideal agency for world redistribution would be a democratic *world* government'. On its own, however, even this would be inadequate if it neglected to safeguard the environment, both in respect of current generations and of future generations. This leads them to suggest an international political authority for the legal regulation of environmental pollution.

> Of course, such an authority would stand no chance of success unless its regulatory activity were combined with an international reallocation of goods and services which would make it economically feasible for underdeveloped countries to act accordingly. (Doyal and Gough, 1991: 143)

Having expanded Rawls's 'veil of ignorance' to include ignorance about what gender actors in the original position might be, or what country they might be born in, Doyal and Gough then expand it further to include ignorance about whether they would be born into the present or some (undefined) future, thus constructing an argument in favour of long-term environmental conservation policies (ibid: 144-146). They go on to discuss a range of social and other indicators which may be used for the practical measurement of specific need-satisfaction in different social and cultural contexts.

Doyal and Gough's approach to the fulfilment of need, then, of necessity involves the global redistribution of goods and services *as a condition of the extension of democracy*. Giddens evades any serious discussion of this problem by stating simply that his new politics would not neglect the material resources which might allow individuals to negotiate changes in their life circumstances (1994:187), before referring the reader back to the 'goods relevant to the pursuit of happiness: security, self-respect, self actualisation' (ibid: 191).

This really will not do. Giddens's 'utopian realism' results in the over-simplified portrayal of a fantastical social order in which the unemployed are not down-hearted or demoralised by wishing for a job, but acknowledge that 'unemployment' is a subjective condition one can think oneself out of (ibid: 186); a social order where old people are fit and healthy due to their exemplary life style practices, so are not dumped on the scrap heap of industry at an arbitrary sixty five, but instead enabled to work - not out of dull economic necessity, but for the intrinsic satisfaction work brings (ibid: 170-1); a social order in which crime and domestic violence has been eradicated by strategic prevention campaigns and therapeutic programmes (ibid: 155-6); and in which a politics of individual lifestyle choice will lead us to a set of universal values consonant with environmental damage limitation via the return of repressed existential questions.

Life politics is not a politics of the environment, since it is devoid of any realistic suggestions for the radical social and institutional changes necessary for any serious consideration of either local or global environmental issues. Nor does it have any valid conception of how a socially just society might be created. The two problems are linked, for as Goldblatt points out, the question of how to persuade 'the intransigent, the selfish, the powerful and the uninterested' that such change is both necessary and desirable, remains to be answered in Giddens's social theory (1996: 202-3).

Assessment of Giddens's Contribution

As a result of both his international fame and his centrality within British sociology, Giddens's adoption of environmental issues means that they will reach a much wider audience than would have otherwise been the case. Among his readers will be sociologists, politicians and ordinary citizens who remain unconvinced about the salience, and urgency of environmental issues, as well as those who, like Goldblatt, are already converted. It becomes all the more important, therefore, to assess the adequacy of his interpretation.

How is this to be connected to environmental sociology? It seems to have little to do with a New Ecological Paradigm in which humans are seen to be just one species among many others. This new paradigm suggests that our 'natural' environment has some intrinsic value independent of its use for or threats to humanity's well-being. While Giddens recognises the impact of the unintended consequences of human activity to the extent that they create high consequence risks for humanity as a whole, he has nothing to say about the value of natural environments either in relation to their intrinsic value, for their aesthetic qualities for humans, or their value for non-human animals and plants. In other words, his treatment of the problems of environmental degradation is limited to its status as a Durkheimian moral or 'social fact', rather than in relation to concrete physical and practical problems of the constraints on human action imposed by the finite nature of natural resources and our ultimate dependence on air, water, sunlight, plants and animals, not for personal autonomy, or self-development, but for survival itself.[11] Giddens considers the impact of human activity on physical or organic nature only to the extent that its 'transformation' has led to its 'socialisation'. This means, he says, - though it is impossible to be sure exactly what he means by this- that it is no longer possible to defend it in the 'natural way' (1994: 205).

Likewise, he has little to say about (ecological) 'constraint', seeming always more interested in the way in which it is always tied to enablement (as the source of moral meaning). Yet, in spite of our technological prowess, such 'constraints' do exist in the natural environment. Even if only 'in the last resort', human life itself is dependent on the capacity of the earth to provide the means of its production, reproduction and maintenance. Giddens, then, cannot be justifiably said to have adopted the New Ecological Paradigm, since he has incorporated environmental issues within the bounds of what is implied by structuration theory - a theory that, in significant respects, remains tied to the early British sociological tradition established at LSE in the work of L.T. Hobhouse.

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11 Mol and Spaargaren (1993) would no doubt label this statement 'eco-alarmism'. Nevertheless, it is true.

Conclusion.

Sociology and the Issue of the Environment

Inevitably, it is possible to read this account in a variety of ways. One might, for example, take the account of the early years of British Sociology, in Chapter Three, merely as an attempt to apply the approach to the history of sociology developed in Chapter One, discarding the project's overall emphasis on environment. Alternatively, taking Chapters Two, Three and part of Four together - the interpretation of Geddes' work and the account of his exclusion from academic sociology - it could be read as a plea for his re-instatement and recognition as both a founder of British sociology and as an environmental sociologist. Or, taking the second half of Chapter Four in conjunction with Chapter Five, it might be read as an attempt to establish Giddens's position within a distinctive tradition of sociological (or social) thought and as an 'environmental' critique of that tradition. All of these ways of reading this account would be valid, to the extent that they bear some resemblance to 'authorial' intent.

Taken as a whole, however, the project began as an attempt to investigate the question of why environmental issues were not central in sociology. What sort of answer, bearing in mind the necessary limitations in the scope of the research (as outlined in the introduction), does it provide?

Using the early history of American sociology and Durkheim's sociological theory as examples, Chapter One argued that the neglect of the natural environment in sociology is the result neither of the 'exuberance' of early sociologists, nor of a failure on the part of the interpreters of the sociological classics to emphasise the 'environmental' aspects of their work. Although each of these answers has some relevance, neither is altogether adequate. Instead, drawing primarily on Gouldner (1971), Shils (1971), Becker (1967), and Levine (1995), I argued that sociology's

history needs to be considered reflexively, in terms of both the social, political, economic and environmental background of the societies in which it has been embedded, and of the personal and professional lives of its practitioners. Moreover, drawing on Hannigan's (1995) account of the exclusion of environment from sociology during its early history, the chapter suggested that contemporary sociologists with an interest in the neglect of 'environment' in the history of sociology need to look beyond the theories which have become 'institutionalised' as part of sociology's history as a result of their inclusion in textbooks and histories of sociology. For the environmentalist, Patrick Geddes, for example, sociology was inherently 'environmental' in both a narrow and a broader sense. Yet neither Geddes nor his work appeared in Sorokin's (1928) *Contemporary Sociological Theories*. Consequently, he appeared in neither Timasheff's (1967 [1955]), nor Bierstedt's (1981), nor Hannigan's (1995), accounts of historical sociological theories. In this way, ideas that fail to become institutionalised through incorporation as part of the academic discipline called sociology may be lost, with the result that its intellectual heritage is severely attenuated.

Based on this strategy for the explanation of the neglect of environment in the history of sociology, Chapter Two briefly outlined the historical context in which British sociology developed. This context was one in which political stability was under threat (from both Right and Left) as a result of a number of factors, including the existence of an 'environmental' crisis, itself the result of haphazard and unregulated industrial development, which was in turn partly responsible for the poor physical health and living conditions of the urban masses. These were the conditions in which, during the last quarter of the nineteenth century, Patrick Geddes developed his sociological ideas. Geddes defined 'environment' very broadly, to include the natural, as well as the built and the 'cultural' or social environment. He theorised that the natural environment, in the first instance, largely 'determined' what sorts of economic activity and culture could develop in a given region. In turn, in the process of getting the material goods necessary for survival, people actively altered their environments,

and consequently themselves, their ideas and their social life. Social amelioration, therefore - which was to be the purpose of sociology - had to be grounded in a detailed concrete knowledge of the geology, resources, geography, history and culture of any given region. Geddes' work carried a normative orientation that was overtly *environmentalist*, which lay in his insistence that *real* wealth consisted of the total environmental conditions of social life, including clean air, water and food. These ideas inspired his friends, Victor Branford and James Martin White to begin the process of gaining recognition for sociology as an academic subject in its own right. A sociology in which the natural environment was central, therefore, *had been* in existence in Britain at around the turn of the century. The reason or reasons for its disappearance constitute one answer to the question of why environment is not central in contemporary sociology.

The environmental sociology of Patrick Geddes did not become established as part of the intellectual apparatus of academic sociology for a variety of reasons, not all of which were clearly understood at the time by the people involved in the establishment of sociology as an academic discipline. One of these reasons was the rise of Darwinian science. Others were the popular appeal of eugenics, a degree of political instability, Britain's declining industrial lead, environmental 'crisis', the poverty and ill-health of the people, and the rise of a jealous nationalism. In combination, these factors had the potential to explode into an illiberal ideology based in 'scientific' theories of the genetic inheritance of superior or inferior 'national' characteristics. One implication of such theories was that the 'internal' environment of the 'germ plasm', rather than the 'external' environment of the earth was the all-important factor in social evolution, development or amelioration. According to such theories, the improvement of the environment, social *or* natural, would be ineffectual as a means to social amelioration. Another implication (of Darwinian theory in particular), however, was that 'evolution' was a process which humanity could not control. This led some social theorists to counter this by over-emphasising human autonomy in respect of natural forces. Yet beyond these external reasons for the exclusion of environment, and inter-mingled with

them, there were others: the clash of two difficult personalities, academic jealousy, competition for the Martin White Chair, and social class differences.

Turn of the century sociologists may not have been clear about exactly how they were to define their science, but they had clearly decided that sociology *would be* a science. Moreover, what a science needed, above all, was 'one great thinker' as the eugenist Pearson had put it, to unify under a single theoretical umbrella all the disparate areas of research that comprised the new subject. While aiming to ensure that their subject remained distinct from biology, sociology's practitioners would seek to emulate both Darwin's detailed research methods, and his theoretical achievement. This, as Branford pointed out, was what Durkheim appeared to be doing in France. Yet Durkheim, as a Frenchman, could not be the leader of a *British* sociology. Nor, in the end, could Galton, in spite of the popularity of eugenics among certain sections of the population. In the first place, he was too old. Secondly, he was a man of private means, and well before the establishment of a Chair in sociology at LSE, he had endowed a Eugenics Records Office at the University of London. This left two candidates for the position of sociology's 'great man of science': Patrick Geddes and Leonard Hobhouse. Both believed that the route to social amelioration was through improvement of the environment. Each, though, defined environment to mean something different. For Hobhouse, environment was primarily 'social', while for Geddes it was nature and buildings, history and education, and even the 'internal' genetic environment of individuals. This difference was not enough, on its own, to account for the ferocious nature of the dispute, and the finality of its conclusion. The theoretical perspectives of Hobhouse and Geddes were in many respects similar. Both believed that human beings were intrinsically social, and in the value of co-operation, other-directed behaviour and community, over atomistic self-interested competition. Yet, in the end, it came down to the question of determinism versus free-will. Hobhouse wanted to believe in human rationality and perfectibility, in humankind's ability to control the conditions of its own development. He could not concede a

position which, like Geddes', insisted that humanity was, at least in part, determined by something other than itself.

In the atmosphere of the times, sociology could have either Hobhouse or Geddes for its 'great man of science'. It could not have both. This was not only the result of prevailing external conditions however, since, had they chosen to collaborate, they could undoubtedly have done so (although only one of them could be the leader of the British sociological community). In the final analysis, neither man could tolerate the other.

Hobhouse began from a position of social and educational advantage. He spoke with the 'right' accent, adhered to (almost) the 'right' politics, mixed in the 'right' social circles, and had been educated at the 'right' place. Moreover, whether by accident or design, he had managed, by 1907, to manoeuvre himself into a central position with respect to the new subject of sociology. Geddes, by contrast, was a self-educated Scot with an acid tongue, who spurned the formal machinery of contemporary politics and had no good word for a system of education in which knowledge was over-specialised and compartmentalised. He began with all these disadvantages. He and Hobhouse may have fallen out over the issue of the Martin White Chair, but there is evidence to suggest both that the dispute began earlier than this, with Geddes' refusal to jettison Darwinian theory entirely, and that Hobhouse later made a deliberate attempt to exclude both Geddes and a Geddesian perspective from sociology. Both men were, in different ways, difficult personalities, and neither ever forgave the other. As a result, the two branches of sociology became irretrievably cut off from one another, and where one became institutionalised through its formal incorporation in the university system, the other perished in obscurity.

Thus, the story of the establishment of academic sociology in Britain is simultaneously the story of Geddes' exclusion, and of the exclusion of all but the social or cultural 'environment' from a sociological perspective.

Moreover, this exclusion had far-reaching consequences. A Hobhousian orientation - aided by economic depression, Ginsberg's personal allegiance to

Hobhouse, the LSE's exclusion of the eccentric Hogben, and Farquharson's disloyal behaviour, as well as by the Le Play Society's failure to fully comprehend the Geddesian system, - continued to dominate the subject until the 1950s. The result was that sociology's personnel, during the expansion of the 1960s, were ill-equipped by their theoretical training to practice a discipline in which 'natural' as well as 'cultural' environments were central. Britain's central contemporary sociological theorist, Anthony Giddens, himself a student during the 1950s, appears to have inherited a Hobhousian perspective. His theory, like Hobhouse's, awards causal primacy to the purposive, reflexive human agent. Thus, in spite of his readiness to take on board the issue of the contemporary environmental 'crisis', this can only be conceptualised as high-consequence manufactured 'risk', to which there are no structural solutions, but which must be dealt with through the development of appropriate life-values at the level of the individual (although such values may be encouraged formally by appropriate political or structural means). This position, which appears to make the solution to the contemporary environmental crisis a matter for informed individual choice, side-steps the linked issues of the finitude of natural resources and the problem of their pollution and over-consumption by both collectivities and individuals who already have access to greater authoritative and allocative resources. It is concerned largely with the impact of 'manufactured' risks on individual and collective psychology, rather than with either the impact of agents on nature itself or with the unequal distribution of either finite natural resources or 'authoritative' resources as transformative capacity. The latter, though it is a question which is more 'traditionally' the province of sociology, remains as important a part of an environmental sociology as the former, since environmental sociology cannot confine itself to issues of 'natural' amelioration, while eschewing issues to do with social amelioration, without ceasing to be recognisable *as* sociology.

Giddens's theory constitutes an inadequate response to the issue of the contemporary environmental crisis, and the reasons for this are connected with his embeddedness within a tradition of sociological theory established during the first

quarter of the twentieth century - a tradition in which the development of 'mind' was the central causal factor in social development. In view of his centrality, however, both academically and politically, this approach to environmental issues is likely to reach a wide public. It is an approach that is likely to appeal to many, particularly those who have greater access to allocative and authoritative resources, if only because it neither challenges their right to this access, nor threatens to take it away from them except through their own choice. It is an approach that does not challenge either our (dominant) political ideology, in which the concept of individual autonomy is dominant, or the more generalised (dominant) Western world view (in which humanity is autonomous with respect to an external nature) that the New Ecological Paradigm initially set itself against (see above, Chapter 1). Thus Giddens's position at the top of a 'hierarchy of credibility' is linked to the nature of his theoretical work. Given the self-reinforcing nature of a dominant ideology or world view, which by virtue of its position at the apex of a hierarchy of credibility has not only more 'right to be heard', but, in consequence, more chance of remaining dominant, the prospects for the institutionalisation of a more radical and (possibly) more adequate environmental sociology - one which is concerned with the impact of human societies on 'nature' (whether this is seen to be 'socialised' or not) - currently seem rather slim.

So far it is all negative. To conclude that environment has been excluded, historically, from British sociology, for reasons that have no necessary or intrinsic connection to the discipline itself; that Giddens's inadequate response to the issue of the contemporary environmental crisis is the result of his embeddedness within a tradition established by Hobhouse; - and that as a result of the existence of a self-perpetuating hierarchy of credibility in (and outside) sociology, this situation is unlikely to change - is hardly uplifting. A project that began from the researcher's profound disillusionment with the discipline of sociology - and which has insisted on the connection between everyday life and professional practice of sociologists - needs something more positive, if is not to end with that researcher walking away into an Autumn sunset vowing to abandon sociology forever.

Gouldner's (1971) suggestion that sociologists need to become more 'reflexive' - so long as reflexivity is understood to mean more than simply institutional reflexivity and goes beyond the 'internally referential' - remains valuable. Reflexivity, both as self-awareness and as awareness of sociology's historical embeddedness, are useful sociological tools. The recognition that sociology's institutional forms are no more value-free than its practitioners, if it leads to the rediscovery of 'neglected' examples of early environmental sociology (i.e., Mukerjee, Geddes), is not only enlightening on a personal level, but may yet help to bring about the re-definition of sociology that the New Ecological Paradigm has so far failed to achieve. Such a re-definition need not be total, nor based on environmentalist convictions. An *en masse* conversion to the environmentalist cause, is not only unlikely, but would be unhealthy for a discipline which thrives on debate and opposition. Perhaps all that is necessary is that contemporary sociologists should recognise that far from the natural external 'environment' having been, historically and 'traditionally', outside the purview of a discipline that purports to examine the 'social', its absence has been due rather to non-disciplinary factors than to anything inherent in the nature of the discipline itself. Thus, the study of the relations between human societies and the external 'natural' environments, on which they necessarily depend for survival itself, may come to be understood as an inherent and fundamental part of what its means to 'do' sociology. It is even possible, in spite of the obvious and substantial differences of both a quantitative and qualitative nature between earlier environmental 'crises' and the contemporary one, that early examples of environmental sociology have something to add to contemporary debates.

Is this the case with the environmental sociology of Patrick Geddes? The answer is yes - but it is a qualified yes. Geddes has much to offer in respect of a contemporary environmental sociology, but in the last analysis - and somewhat ironically in the context of this project - his theory of society-nature relations remains as inadequate as, and in a similar way to, that of Giddens.

Geddes began from the assumption that human societies were an intrinsic part of their external environments. Simply in order to survive, social beings must necessarily take up matter and energy from their surrounding environment. What sorts of matter and energy were available in any given territory would have some significant bearing on what sorts of cultural life could develop. This, then, was an environmentally determinist theory. But it was not wholly so. Geddes, who like Hobhouse was committed to the notion of social evolution, believed that human beings were not merely determined by the surroundings, but interacted with them *creatively*. Human societies actively produced their own environments, and *in doing so* altered the consciousness (beliefs, ideas and values) of their individual members. This, we should note, has much in common with Giddens's insistence on the altered consciousness (as risk-anxiety) produced in individual agents by 'environments' of high-consequence manufactured risk. For Giddens, risk anxiety leads agents to re-connect with a number of basic moral or existential questions, leading to 'appropriate' life-political choices. A major difficulty with this position is that it does not adequately address the issue of the unequal distribution of allocative and authoritative resources as power. Yet in contemporary capitalist societies there are wide disparities in the degree of transformative capacity (as the power to make a difference), between individuals and collective agents, and both within nations and between them. Put bluntly, the capacity to make a difference to environments of all sorts is much greater for some than for others.

Geddes fares no better in this respect. For although his theory insists that 'good' environments can be actively created, and is superior to the extent that he attempted to outline (and through his practice to bring into being) the sorts of total environmental conditions of living that would create 'real wealth', personal fulfilment and community life, without also producing foul air, poisoned food and dirty water, he produced no realistic political theory for their widespread achievement. In spite of his regionalism, through which he insisted that different regions required different solutions, and his insistence on the importance of the conservation of resources, Geddes' vision remained

a Utopian dream. Through his avoidance of formal institutional political means to the achievement of social amelioration, as well as through his personal practice, Geddes' message seemed to be 'do it yourself'. And while this message was not then, and is not now, without value, it succeeds no more successfully than Giddens's theory at addressing structural issues to do with inequality of access to resources, or the unequal capacity to pollute and consume them.

In spite of this and other failings, however, and in spite of the voluminous thickets of mangled prose he created in attempting to transmit his vision of the good society, Geddes' work contains much that is useful. His emphasis on the value of emotion in everyday life, and his simple psychology, in which different environments created different thought-worlds based on our senses, experiences, and feelings, may have none of the sophistication of Giddens's much more complex contemporary constructions. Yet they serve to remind us, as sociologists, of some things that require no theory of the unconscious or unacknowledged conditions of action in order to be explicable. These are things we acknowledge, explicitly, each time we are moved by a dramatic or beautiful view; when we say that our job (or the weather) is getting us down, or that we are pleased to be home. These things are the power of place, natural or built; the importance of useful and satisfying employment; and our emotional attachment to people. Giddens would not, I am certain, disagree. Geddes' attempt, as early as 1881, to draw up a programme (see again, figure 1), for the achievement and distribution of 'real wealth', was admittedly over-ambitious. He had no theoretical answer to the issue of unequal power. Yet the refusal to separate humanity from nature; the insistence on the conservation of resources; on the power of people to creatively alter environments, and of environments to alter our consciousness; as well as the idea that real wealth consists in the totality of natural, architectural and cultural conditions, rather than in ever increasing consumption of transient ultimate products, make Geddesian sociological ideas - at the very least - well worth further investigation.

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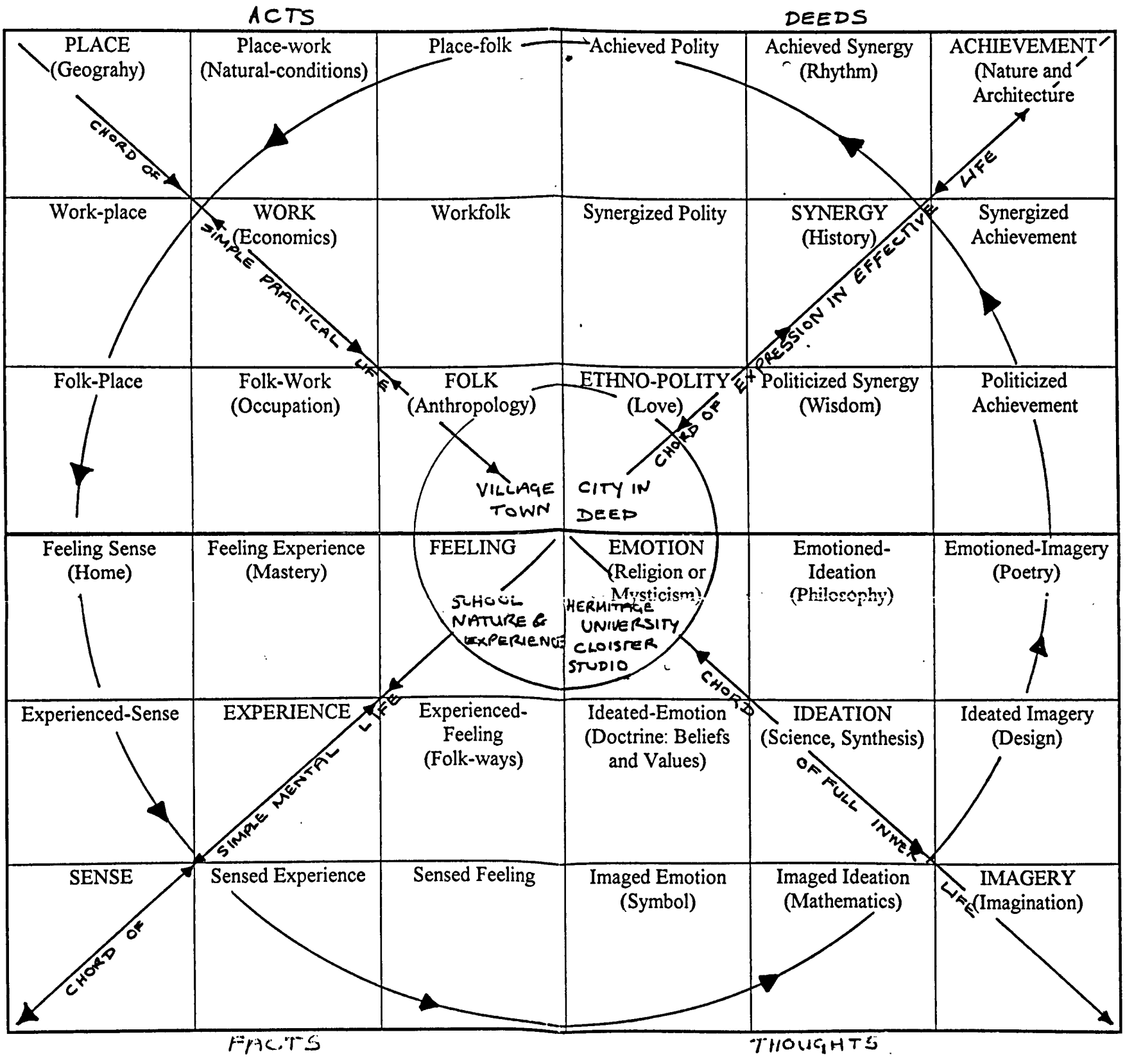
Figure 3: Patrick Geddes Diagram of 'The Theory of Civics' or 'The Mapping of Life':
Reproduced and adapted from Tyrwhitt (1972: 20), and Boardman, (1978: 474-7)



Geddes' 36 square diagram went through several permutations over time. This version, though slightly simplifed, gives some idea of the difficulties he created for the understanding of his work by insisting on using this method of presentation. Geddes' references to the nine Greek muses to represent the political sphere (nine squares at top right) have been omitted. I have also altered what was perhaps the most unfortunate aspect of the table - an attempt to represent the (idealised) movement of historical time, and the (ideal) influence of place-work-folk on politics - which appeared in some versions as a swastika. I have made it instead a circular line, with arrows to indicate directionality.
The nine squares at top left of the diagram, when isolated from the others, show Geddes' most famous thinking machine.

Society, ... *Date,* ..

CLASSIFICATION OF STATISTICS.

A

(Space Relations.) TERRITORY OF SOCIETY.—I. QUANTITATIVE.

	Previously Existent.	INCREASE.				
		By Social Agency.				By Geologic Agency.
		Discovery	Conquest	Purchase	Reclamation,	
LAND.						
WATER.						

TERRITORY OF SOCIETY.—II. QUALITATIVE.

	UNUSED.	USED.	
		Unspecialised for	Specialised for
		For Use	For Use
LAND.			
WATER.			

TERRITORY OF SOCIETY.—III. DECREASE.

	By Social Agency.	By Geologic Agency.
LAND.		
WATER.		

B

PRODUCTION.—I. (*a.*) SOURCES OF ENERGY IN TERRITORY.

Primitive Chem. Affinity.	Earth's Internal Heat.	Earth's Rotation.	SOLAR RADIATION.				
Potential.	Kinetic.	Kinetic.	Kinetic.	Potential.			
				Earth's Crust.	Organisms.		
					Surrounding Society.		Composing Society.
					Plants.	Animals.	
.1. Elements (uncombined).	.1. Hotsprings. *B.* Volcanoes.	.1. Tides.	.1. Sunshine. *B.* Falling water. *C.* Wind.	(.1. Food) *B.* Fuel— 1. Coal. 2. Lignite peat. 3. Oil and gas springs. *C.* Soil (deoxidised matter of).	.1. Food. *B.* Fuel.	.1. Food. *B.* Fuel. *C.* Machines.	.1. Food. *B.* Fuel. *C.* Machines.

(*β.*) SOURCES OF MATTER USED FOR THE SAKE OF OTHER PROPERTIES (Physical—Chemical—Physiological).

Mineral.				Vegetable.	Animal.
Non-Metals.	Ores.	Rocks.	Soils.	Natural Orders.	Natural Orders.

Production. II. DEVELOPMENT OF ULTIMATE PRODUCTS.

	Potential Products. (Raw Material.)	Exploitation.	Manufacture.	Movement.	Ultimate Products.
α. ENERGY.	Tides, Sunshine, Falling water, Wind, Coal and peat, Plants, Animals, &c.	Agriculture, Fishery, Mining, Engineering, &c.		Transportation and Exchange.	*e.g.* Protective and Supporting. Locomotive. Alimentary. Æsthetic. Destructive Remedial.
	Waste products.				
β. MATTER.	Non-metals, Metals, Rocks and soils, Plants, Animals, &c.				
	Waste products.				

Production. III. LOSS. Premature Dissipation of Energy and Disintegration of Matter.

Agency.	In Raw Materials.	In Exploitation.	In Manufacture.	In Transport.	In Exchange.	In ultimate Products.	In Remedial Effort.
.1. Physical, *e.g.*, Avalanche, Volcano, Earthquake, Flood, Storm.							
B. Biological, *e.g.*, Insects, Fungi.							
C. Social. *e.g.*, Crime War. Folly.							

C

ORGANISMS COMPOSING SOCIETY.—I. QUANTITATIVE.

Sex.	Previously Existent.	INCREASE.	
		Immigrants.	Births.

ORGANISMS COMPOSING SOCIETY.—II. QUALITATIVE.

	BIOLOGICAL.				PSYCHO-LOGICAL.	SOCIAL.
Distribution.	Structure.				Function. (Efficiency.)	Mutual Relations.
	Ethnological.		Anthropometric.		Non-Cerebral. Cerebral.	
	Race.	Aspect.	Size.	Weight, &c.		

ORGANISMS COMPOSING SOCIETY.—III. DECREASE.

Emigrants.	Deaths.

(Time Relations.) OCCUPATIONS I. Operations on Matter and Energy. (Indirect services to members of Society.)

Sex.	Energy and Matter.	Exploitation.	Manufacture.	Transport.	Exchange.
	See Table B II. Development of Ultimate Products.				

OCCUPATIONS II. Operations on Organisms. (Direct services to members of Society.)

Service of Non-Cerebral Functions.		Service of Cerebral Functions.			Service of Co-ordination.
Menial, &c.	Domestic.	Æsthetic.	Intellectual.	Moral.	Government, &c.

OCCUPATIONS III.

Unemployed.			Disabled.			Destructive.		Remedial of		
Youth.	Misadventure.	Refusal.	Disease.	Defect.	Age	War.	Crime.	Disaster.	Disablement.	Destruction.

MEDIATE PARTITION *NIL* AND TO CLASS I.

	Nil (Common to all Classes).				
Claims (Currency, &c.) Potential Products. Mediate Products.					

MEDIATE PARTITION TO CLASS II.

MEDIATE PARTITION TO CLASS III.

D

ULTIMATE PARTITION *NIL* AND TO CLASS I.

Territory. Ultimate Products. Services.					

ULTIMATE PARTITION TO CLASS II.

ULTIMATE PARTITION TO CLASS III.

USE IN COMMON, AND BY CLASS I.

USE BY CLASS II.

USE BY CLASS III.

RESULT TO COMMUNITY, AND CLASS I.

RESULT—CLASS II.

RESULT—CLASS III.

Figure 1: reproduced from Geddes (1881) 'The Classification of Statistics and its Results'